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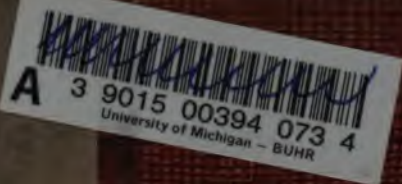
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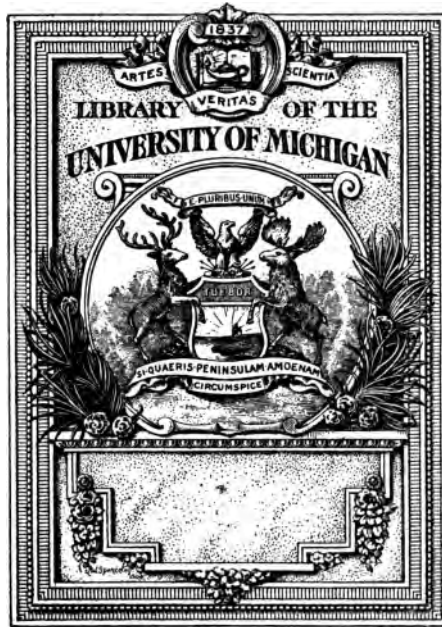
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# THE INFLECTION OF THE ENGLISH PRESENT PLURAL INDICATIVE

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE  
NORTHERN DIALECT

## A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF  
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## PREFACE.

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When the study of historical English grammar became a comparatively exact science, there was felt to be a need for an investigation of the dialectal inflection of the present indicative plural. The long-continued labors of Morris marked such an advance in our knowledge of English grammar that since his day the inflection of the present plural indicative has been regarded as one of the chief tests of dialect. But important though the establishment of the facts was, its value was somewhat impaired by the failure to explain historically the dialectal forms of this inflection. Such an explanation becomes all the more imperative in the case of the Midland, since it is from this dialect that our modern uninflected present plural indicative is derived.

But it is in regard to the Northern dialect that the greatest uncertainty has prevailed among special investigators, in spite of the valuable positive results obtained by Murray. For example, in Skeat's edition of the *Kingis Quair* (S. T. S., 1884, p. xxx) the following assertion is made concerning the form *stenten* in the line, *And quhen I wepe, and stenten othir quhile*: 'It is a translation into Chaucerian language of the Northern word *styntis*, for, in the Northern dialect, the phrases *I stintis* and *we stintis* were once equally correct.' The reader is here led into the belief that in the Northern dialect the inflected form in *-s* was used when the verb was in contact with a personal pronominal subject, whereas in point of fact the uninflected form was required, just as in Modern English. He is further confirmed in this erroneous impression by a similar assertion in G. Schleich's *Ywain and Gawain* (Oppeln and Leipzig, 1887, p. xviii): 'Moreover the ending *-s*, *-es* occurs repeatedly, although never assured by the rime: compare *we suffers*, 3044; *ye thinkes*, 1530,' etc.

Even as late as 1898, not mere vagueness of knowledge but positive inaccuracy of a fundamental kind was shown by this paradigm in the *Specimens of Early English* (Morris and Skeat,

Fourth edition, Oxford, 1898, p. xxxi): 'Plural—1. love; 2. loves; 3. love; loves.' Since no explanation is made why a North countryman says *we love* but *ye loves*, and, at the same time, either *they love* or *they loves*, the student is left to the possible inference that the inflections of the third person represent a sort of arithmetical summing up of the forms of the other two persons.

Finally, it must be urged that writers who recognize the influence of a personal pronominal subject upon the form of the verb with which it is in contact, should be more careful as to the manner of presenting Northern constructions, whether to the eye of the special student or to that of the general reader. G. Gregory Smith (*Specimens of the Middle Scots*, Edinburgh, 1902, p. xxxv) very truthfully declares that 'The error that all the persons in the Northern present tense are the same and in *-s* still holds in the text-books'; yet on the same page he gives as the inflections of the different persons when the nominative is not a personal pronoun or when the verb is remote from its personal pronominal subject: *I fyndis, thou fyndis, he fyndis, we fyndis, ye fyndis, thay fyndis*. Such a method of presentation can not be distinguished from the errors cited at first and should be systematically avoided, since only the second and the third of the forms given here actually occur in the original texts.

INTRODUCTION.—A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE  
VIEWS CONCERNING THE ORIGIN AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MIDDLE  
ENGLISH INFLECTIONS OF  
THE PRESENT INDICA-  
TIVE PLURAL.

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Before the appearance of Mätzner's grammar in 1860, the view concerning the varying forms assumed by the present indicative plural of the verb in Anglo-Saxon is well represented by Bosworth and Rask. The former in his *Anglo-Saxon Grammar* (London, 1823, p. 146 ff.), expresses himself to this effect :

‘When the infinitive ends in *-an* with a vowel before it, the plural persons end in *-iað* : as, *hingrian*, to hunger, *hingriað*, we, ye, they hunger ; *wyrian*, to curse, *wyriað*, we, ye, they curse. If it end in *-eon*, they are formed in *-eoð* : as, *geseon*, to see, *geseoð*, we, ye, they see ; but if a consonant goes before *-an*, then they end in *-að* : as, *þyrstan*, to thirst, *þyrstað*, we, ye, they thirst. The plural persons also end in *-en*, *-on*, *-un*, as well as *-að* : as, *witun*, *witað*, ye wot, or know ; *nyton*, *nuuton*, *nytað*, ye know not. It is sometimes read *wutas*, ye know, and by the poets *wutoð*, for they often use the termination *-oð* instead of *-að*. The plural persons often end in the same manner as the first person singular, especially when the Saxon pronoun is placed after the verb : as, *Hwæt ete we*, what shall we eat ; *Hu fleo ge*, how shall you fly.’

In like manner Rask explains the varying forms (*Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Tongue*, translated by B. Thorpe, Copenhagen, 1830, p. 71) :

‘The two terminations of the plural indicative and imperative are thus distinguished : the first form in *-að* is used when the pronoun, as subject, precedes or is omitted ; but the other form in *-e* when the pronoun follows.’

On page 170, Rask treats of dialectal forms :

‘In Northumbrian *-s* is often used, instead of *-ð* or *-þ*, in the termination of verbs. Here it also appears that the difference between *-að* and *-e* in the plural is lost.’

## 2 Middle English Inflections of the Present Indicative Plural.

The first edition of Mätzner's *Englische Grammatik* (Berlin, 1860, I, 323) does not much advance our knowledge of the dialectal forms of the present indicative plural. After a paradigm of the Anglo-Saxon [West-Saxon] forms of the full verb, Mätzner (as I translate) has the following:

The suffixes of the Anglo-Saxon are subjected to various alterations and substitutions in English. . . . The three persons of the indicative plural present appear as *-eth*, seldom *-oth* or *-uth*: *We honourep Venus (Robert of Gloucester, I, 112)*. . . . Later, however, there occur *-es* and *-is*, *-ys* beside *-eth*, especially in the North, where the forms fall together with the third person singular: *We er richer men than he, and mor gode haues (Percy Rel., p. 93, II)*. . . . At an early date the plural suffix *-en*, which belonged to the subjunctive, appears in the indicative as well as in the subjunctive.

In the second edition (1873), only the last sentence has been noticeably modified:

At an early date the plural suffix *-en* appears in the indicative, especially in the Midland, as in the Low German dialects, so that the indicative seems to be connected with the Anglo-Saxon subjunctive forms, or at least falls together with them: *We hauen misdo mikel (Havelok, 2798)*; *Now we leuen Joseph, and of þe kyng carpen (Joseph of Arimathie, 175)*. The interchange of plural forms in *-en*, *-es*, *-eth* and forms with the final consonant dropped takes place gradually: *In glotonye Go thei to bedde And risen with ribaudie (Alliterative Poems, 85)*. . . . Already in the fourteenth century the loss of the inflectional ending has become widespread; the ending *-en* disappears earlier from the subjunctive and the indicative than the ending *-eth* from the latter.

The third edition of Mätzner (1880) repeats the second without variation in all that is said concerning the inflection of the present indicative plural.

Fiedler (*Wissenschaftliche Grammatik der englischen Sprache*, Leipzig, 1861, p. 47) accounts in the following manner for the form *-en* in the present indicative:

The inflection of the present indicative plural is still [1100–1250] *-eð*: *we habbeð, wo clepiað*, besides which there also appears the inorganic ending *-en*. It was probably carried over from the preterit into

the indicative and is already the usual inflection in the *Proverbs of Alfred* and the semi-Saxon homilies.

Koch attempts an historical explanation of the regular West-Saxon plural form in his *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache* (Weimar, 1863, I, p. 336):

In Old Saxon and Anglo-Saxon there is found for the three persons only one sign; the former has in the present indicative *-d*, the latter *-ð*. Old Saxon *-d* corresponds to the Gothic *-and* and would therefore be *-ād*; the Anglo-Saxon would correspond in the second plural to the Gothic *-iþ* and it is surprising that in the older tongue the *i* should appear weakened, whereas the Anglo-Saxon retains *-aþ*.

Koch (p. 335) notes that *s*-forms occur in Northumbrian in the indicative plural, which he regards as a degeneration (*Entartung*) of the forms in *-þ*.

In the same year that was marked by the appearance of Koch's grammar, Morris wrote in his preface to Richard Rolle's *Pricke of Conscience* (published in the *Philological Society's Early English Volume*), p. xviii:

'The conjugation of the Northumbrian verb is extremely simple, one form in *s* being used for every person in the present tense, indicative mood. It is moreover a test by which Northumbrian may be distinguished from other dialects of the North of England. . . . We have occasionally (thai) *loven* instead of (thai) *loves*. . . . The Northumbrian has what may be called an uninflected imperative, conjugated as follows: *Ga I, ga thou, ga he; ga we, ga yhou, ga thai*.'

Morris also gives grammatical prefaces for the West Midland in *Early English Alliterative Poems* (E. E. T. S., 1); for the East Midland in *The Story of Genesis and Exodus* (E. E. T. S., 7) and *Old English Homilies*, Second Series (E. E. T. S., 53); for the Southern in *The Ayenbite of Inwyt* (E. E. T. S., 23), *Old English Homilies*, First Series (E. E. T. S., 29); and *An Old English Miscellany* (E. E. T. S., 49). He has summed up the results of his studies in the *Historical Outlines of English Accidence* (London, 1873, p. 173), where the inflections of the indicative plural present are thus given: Southern—*-eth*; Midland—*-en*; Northern—1. *-(e)*; 2. *-(e)s*; 3. *-(e)s*. A slight change in presenting these inflec-

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tions is seen in his *Specimens of Early English* (Oxford, 1882, I, p. xxxvii): Northern—1. *hopes*; 2. *hopes*; 3. *hopes*. In a footnote to this passage, Morris says the Northern dialect often drops the *-s* in the first person, and the Midland the *-n* in all persons.

These paradigms are repeated without alteration in *Specimens of Early English* (Morris and Skeat, Oxford, 1898, p. xix), but on p. xxxi, the Northern present indicative plural is given as—1. *love*; 2. *loves*; 3. *love, loves*. No explanation is offered, however, for putting these double forms for the third plural.

The problem of the varying forms of the present indicative plural in West-Saxon was discussed by Sweet in the introduction to King Alfred's *West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* (E. E. T. S., 50, p. xxxii):

‘Dropping of final—generally inflectional—*n* is very frequent in H [Hatton MS.]. The *n* is frequently added above the line, but often the correction is neglected, especially towards the end of the MS. It is the *n* of the infinitive, weak adj. inflection, and subjunctive that most frequently suffers this apocope. . . . Such forms as *ne forbinden ge* (105. 7) are interesting as affording an explanation of the well-known difference of ending which depends on the relative position of the verb and its personal pronoun. The frequent dropping of the final *n* has been noticed above, we need not therefore be surprised at one MS. having *ne bredge ge*, while the other retains the final *n* (173. 10, compare also 189. 23). It seems not improbable that these curtailed forms may have gradually extended their range, first appearing in imperatives without the negation, and afterwards in all cases of pronominal postposition. That the *hæbbe ge, wese ge*, etc. of the grammars are of comparatively late origin is shown by the frequent occurrence in the *Pastoral* of the fuller forms *habbað ge* (95. 11), *weahsað ge* (109. 5), *beoð ge* (201. 21). An example of the later form is *beo ge* (189. 22) in both MSS.’

A similar view is expressed by Sweet in *An Anglo-Saxon Reader* (Oxford, 1881, p. lx) and *A New English Grammar* (Oxford, 1892, I, 365).

Substantially the same testimony is given in Sievers's *Angelsächsische Grammatik* (Halle, 1882, § 360), repeated without alteration in the second edition (1886) but modified and expanded in the third edition (1898) [see below, Section C].

Cosijn (*Altwestsächsische Grammatik*, Haag, 1888, II, p. 118) also expresses himself to the same effect :

*Wille wē, wille gē*, the imperative and preterit forms in *-e* (the latter with indicative significance: *ne spilete ge*) prove that we have to deal here only with original forms in *-n* (*-m*) ; consequently *-n* and not *-þ* has been dropped.

The occurrence of the curtailed form in the preterit indicative plural is explained by Cosijn as due to the preterit optative plural used as an indicative, with the consequent dropping of *-n* in the ending *-en* and not in *-on*.

The testimony of Sweet, Sievers, and Cosijn is further strengthened by that of Professor Bright (*Anglo-Saxon Reader*, Third edition, New York, 1899, p. lxii) :

‘When the pronominal subjects *wē*, *we*, *gē*, *ye*, are placed immediately after the verb, the verbal ending is often (not uniformly) reduced to *-e*. Originally this form was in all probability restricted to the adhortative optative ; the *-e* would therefore represent a reduction of *-en*. But in the historic periods of West-Saxon the indic. pres. and pret. and the imperative (*-að* and *-on* also giving way to *-e*) are found attracted into this usage.

Thus, *wē (gē) cweðað*, but *cweðe wē (gē)* ; *wē (gē) magon*, but *mage wē (gē)* ; *wē (gē) nimen*, but *nime wē (gē)* ; *wē (gē) cōmon (sōhton)*, but *cōme (sōhte) wē (gē)*.’



## A.—THE INFLECTION OF THE PRESENT PLURAL INDICATIVE IN THE SOUTH.

To sum up the results of this cursory review, supplementing with fresh material whenever expedient, we find in Early West-Saxon a form  $-(a)\delta$  that is used for the present indicative plural. 'The stroke of the  $\delta$ ' is sometimes omitted, causing the ending to appear as  $-(a)d$ , but this omission was clearly due to the carelessness of the scribe. It is, therefore, not necessary to regard  $-(a)d$  as a separate ending.

This form in  $-(a)\delta$  is used with any subject in the plural, whether noun, personal or relative pronoun, or pronominal adjective: *monige eac wise lareowas winnað mid hira ðeawum, Cura Pastoralis*, 29, 21; *ge fleoð, 7 hydað*, 89, 14; *ða ðe willað to fela idles 7 unnyttes gesprecan*, 17, 4; *ðeahhwæðre monige wilniað folgoðes*, 47, 23.

It may also be used if the subject follows the verb: *ac sona bioð ðæs modes eagan eft gewende*, 56, 12; *habbað ge*, 95, 11; *weahsað ge*, 109, 5.

The same form is used when the verb is separated from its subject: *ðonne hi ðone godecundan wisdom liorniað*, 30, 4.

In addition to the ending  $-(a)\delta$ , there is a form in  $-e$  used in the first and second persons of the present indicative plural, but with a very limited range. It is never used when the subject precedes or is separated from its verb. It may be used if the subject follows the verb, but only on the condition that it be a personal pronoun and be placed immediately after the verb: *ðonne hæbbe we*, 45, 12. But if the subject that follows the verb is a noun or a pronominal adjective, the ending must be  $-(a)\delta$ . From this rule there are no exceptions in the *Cura Pastoralis*.

We have, then, in Early West-Saxon two endings for the present indicative plural,  $-(a)\delta$  and  $-e$ , the former being used with the greatest possible freedom, the latter within a sharply defined and limited range. But, as has been shown, the uses of the two are not mutually exclusive. The scope of the  $-(a)\delta$ -forms is so wide as to include that of the forms in  $-e$ ; or, more accurately stated, the

e-form had already begun in the time of Alfred to encroach on the territory of the -(a)ð-form without being able, however, to drive it from the field.

This -e was not originally an ending of the plural indicative but is a curtailment of the -en of the plural subjunctive. Since the imperative proper had only one form in the plural, namely the second person, the first and third persons were supplied from the subjunctive. There is a trace of an old adhortative first plural in -an in the imperative but this soon gave way to the corresponding subjunctive, or optative, form in -en. The adhortative optative, when intensified by stress, easily acquired a jussive sense. This led to an extension of the optative forms to the second person of the imperative, that is, to the imperative proper. The extension of subjunctive forms to the indicative was aided by *willan*, itself originally an optative, the meaning<sup>1</sup> of which made it particularly adapted to mediate between the two moods. The use of curtailed endings in the indicative was also facilitated by the preteritive presents, in which the plural inflection -on lent itself readily to leveling with the optative or to curtailment.

The encroachment of the optative on the imperative is considered in the following monographs.

M. Braunschweiger, *Die Flexion des Verbums in Ælfric's Grammatik* (Marburg, 1890, p. 10).

C. Brühl, *Die Flexion des Verbums in Ælfric's Heptateuch und Buch Hiob* (Marburg, 1892, p. 11).

W. Fleischhauer, *Ueber den Gebrauch des Conjunctivs in Alfred's altengl. Uebersetzung von Gregor's Cura Pastoralis* (Göttingen, 1889, pp. 4-5).

O. Hennicke, *Der Konjunktiv im Altenglischen* (Göttingen, 1878, pp. 11-12).

A. N. Henshaw, *The Syntax of the Indicative and Subjunctive Moods in the Anglo-Saxon Gospels* (Leipzig-Reudnitz, 1894, pp. 9-10).

<sup>1</sup> In this connection note the extension of an optative inflection to the second singular of the preterit indicative in all the West-Germanic dialects (cf. Kluge, *Vorgeschichte der altgerm. Dialekte*,<sup>2</sup> § 199). The use of a diplomatic subjunctive as an indicative may also account for *ihr seid* in Modern German, and may prove a better explanation of *dürfen, können, mögen, müssen*, etc., than the theory of O. Brenner (*Beitr.*, XX, 84), who holds that the umlaut arose from postpositive *wir, ir, and sie*. Note also *mich (mir) deucht*, which was originally a subjunctive.

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G. Hotz, *On the Use of the Subjunctive Mood in Anglo-Saxon and its further History in Old English* (Zürich, 1882, pp. 13-16).

P. T. Kühn, *Die Syntax des Verbums in Ælfrics Heiligenleben* (Leipzig-Reudnitz, 1889, p. 9).

M. Prollius, *Ueber den syntactischen Gebrauch des Conjunctivs in den Cynewulfischen Dichtungen, Elene, Juliana, und Crist* (Marburg, 1888, p. 5).

W. Wandschneider, *Zur Syntax des Verbs in Langleys Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman* (Leipzig, 1887, pp. 44-45 and p. 58).

T. Wohlfahrt, *Die Syntax des Verbums in Ælfrics Uebersetzung des Heptateuch und des Buches Hiob* (München, 1886, pp. 2-3).

Although both the forms *-e* and *-en* occur in the optative plural, it is noteworthy that only the former occurs in the present indicative plural in the *Cura Pastoralis*. The *e*-form is given for the indicative by both manuscripts throughout, whereas they differ eight times in their use of the subjunctive *-e* and *-en*. Of these, five are negative: *ne forbinde ge* (Cotton), *ne forbinden ge* (Hatton), 105, 7; *ne brede ge* (C), *ne bregden [ge]* (H), 173, 10; *ne gremige ge* (C), *ne gremigen ge* (H), 189, 23; *ne gewunige ge* (C), *ne gew[u]nigen ge* (H), 317, 18; and *ne forlæten* (C), *ne forlæte* (H), 136, 12. The other variants are: *gearigen* (C), *gearige* (H), 119, 5; *mægen* (C), *mæge* (H), 119, 5; and *hæbben* (C), *hæbbe* (H), 323, 1.

In addition to these, it should be noted that the manuscripts differ twice in their use of the endings of the preterit plural: *gebrohete* (C), *gebrohiten* (H), 191, 8; and *ðonne æton ge* (C), *ðonne æte ge* (H), 317, 2.

Since the two manuscripts published by Sweet were written in the reign of Alfred,<sup>1</sup> one would infer from these different forms, varying often in the same manuscript,<sup>2</sup> that the older ending *-en* in *ne binden we*, occurring between two more strongly accented

<sup>1</sup> See Sweet's Introduction, p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Wülfing (*Die Syntax in den Werken Alfreds des Grossen*, Bonn, 1894, I, 341) says: 'Ich glaube, dass diese Verschiedenheiten nur auf der Willkür der Schreiber beruhen.' But this is not a sufficient reason. What was the cause of this caprice of the scribes? The fact that similar vagaries do not reveal themselves in the dropping of other inflections, as for instance *-s* or *-ð*, argues for the existence of a cause other than 'die Willkür der Schreiber' for the dropping or the retention of this final *-n*.

syllables,<sup>1</sup> had already become *-e*, *ne binde we*, in actual pronunciation.

From both manuscripts it is seen that the curtailed forms not only predominate in adhortative-optative constructions, but are also carried over into the indicative in not fewer than seventeen instances: *Hwæt cweðe we ðonne*, 175, 5; *Hwæt do ge, broðor, doð esnlíce*, 363, 2; *We brucað ures ægnes, ne gitsige we nanes oðres monnes*, 337, 19. Of these seventeen cases, only three express negation.

We see, moreover, from both manuscripts that the force of analogy had caused the *-e* to be extended to the preteritive presents in *-on* (including *woldon*) in six cases: *hu durre we*, 63, 6; *hu feor wolde ge*, 331, 1. It was also analogically carried over to the *-on* of the preterit indicative in six cases: *ne fæste ge*, 317, 1.

In the late West-Saxon of Ælfric and in the *Blickling Homilies* the inflection of the indicative plural present is the same as in that of Alfred. There is still a tendency on the part of the jussive subjunctive to supplant the imperative plural in *-að*.<sup>2</sup>

During the transition period from late West-Saxon to Middle English, *-að* became first *-æð* and then *-eð* in the latter part of the twelfth century. E. Vogel (*Zur Flexion des englischen Verbums im XI. und XII. Jahrhundert*, Berlin, 1902, p. 25) gives *-æð* with occasional *-eð* as the ending of the plural indicative in MS. H [Bodleian NE. F. iv. 12] of Wulfstan's homilies. According to

<sup>1</sup> A similar process occurs in Old Norse. The final *-m* of the first person plural is very often dropped when the verb is immediately followed by the pronouns *við* (*mí*) or *vér* (*mér*); thus, *bindo vér*, we bind, for *bindom vér*.

Also in the second person plural, the final *-ð* of the ending *-ið*, *-eð* falls regularly when the pronouns *þú*, *þér* immediately follow: *gefe þér*, you give, for *gefeð þér*. In this manner the pronouns *þú* and *þér* were developed from the older forms *it* and *ér* (cf. Noreen, *Altnordische Grammatik*, I, § 458 and § 394, note 5).

The same process is seen in Middle High German. The *-en* of the first person plural indicative is reduced to *-e* in *gebe wir*, *lese wir*. After a long syllable the whole ending was frequently dropped. Already in Hartmann von Aue such forms as *grif wir*, *versuog wir* are found (cf. Weinhold, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik*, Paderborn, 1883, § 369; Paul, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik*, Halle, 1894, § 155, note 2).

<sup>2</sup> C. Brühl, *Die Flexion des Verbums in Ælfrics Heptateuch und Buch Hiob* (Marburg, 1892, p. 11); G. Schwedtfeger, *Das schwache Verbum in Ælfrics Homilien* (Marburg, 1893, p. 9).

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Napier (*Über die Werke des altenglischen Erzbischofs Wulfstan*, Weimar, 1882, p. 10), this manuscript dates from the middle of the twelfth century. Other transitional texts illustrate the gradual weakening of the vowel in the inflectional syllable. B. Buchholz (*Die Fragmente der Reden der Seele an den Leichnam*, *Erlanger Beiträge zur englischen Philologie*, VI, p. xxix and p. lxii) shows that *-eð* is the regular ending of the present indicative plural in the Worcester and the Oxford MSS., also of the twelfth century. In only one instance does *-að* occur.

In the first person plural of the adhortative optative, according to Vogel, there occurs in Wulfstan's homilies no curtailment of the ending before *we*, whereas in the first plural of the indicative the curtailed form is the usual one before the postpositive pronoun. No parallel to this distinction is shown by the *Ancoren Riwle* in which the use of curtailed forms in pronominal postposition is invariable in the adhortative optative but not in the first plural indicative. The distinction made by Wulfstan is also observed in the *Blickling Homilies*, an earlier text, in which only one curtailed form occurs in the adhortative optative.<sup>1</sup> In the two last-mentioned texts the old optative ending *-en* has been replaced by *-an*, which is explained by Sievers as a borrowing of the ending of the preterit optative which had previously been leveled with the preterit indicative.<sup>2</sup> Vogel, however, with much more improbability, prefers to see in the use of this form the influence of the second weak conjugation in which the vowel of the present indicative plural had been extended to the optative plural.

In all three of these texts, both the full form in *-þ* and the curtailed form are used in the indicative when the pronoun is postpositive. Wulfstan shows a much larger percentage of curtailed forms than do the *Blickling Homilies* and the *Ancoren Riwle*. In the second plural imperative Wulfstan and the *Homilies* may have the full *þ*-form before the postpositive pronoun, although the number of such forms in Wulfstan is very small. In the *Ancoren Riwle*, on the contrary, the curtailed form is used throughout. This text even goes so far as to use the curtailed ending in the impera-

<sup>1</sup> A. K. Hardy, *Die Sprache der Blickling Homilien* (Leipzig, 1899, p. 77).

<sup>2</sup> *Angelsächsische Grammatik*, § 361, note 1 and § 365.

tive plural when the subject-pronoun is unexpressed. This use probably originated in the omission of the pronoun because of the contiguity of a following *ge*: as, *loke þet ge habben*, 418. The next step was the omission of the second pronominal subject in the case of two verbs in the same grammatical relation, especially if the second had a pronominal object to aid in determining the form of the verb: *ne bere ge non iren . . . ne ne beate ou þer mide*, 418. Finally, and this important question will be dealt with more fully later, the curtailed form without a postpositive pronoun became used independently: *ne makie none purses . . . auh schep-ieð; ne gelde neuer uel uor god*, 186. This form bore a close resemblance to the imperative singular and in later times, when final *-e* came to lose its syllabic value, this use was responsible for the apparent interchange of the singular and plural imperative in the same discourse.

It is noteworthy that although the curtailed form is common before *we* and *ge*, it does not occur before *heo*. This lack of power on the part of the curtailed ending to extend itself to other persons in the South is in marked contrast to the Northern usage in extending the vocalic forms to 'all cases of pronominal postposition'<sup>1</sup> and even to cases where the pronoun is prepositive.

In the A-text of Layamon's *Brut*<sup>2</sup> about 1200, *The Owl and Nightingale*<sup>3</sup> about 1220, Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*<sup>4</sup> about 1300, and the Gloucestershire legends<sup>5</sup> of the same period, the unconditioned indicative and imperative plural have the *þ*-ending. With a postpositive pronoun, the curtailed ending is frequently, but not invariably, used. In the legends of *St. Editha* and *St. Ethelreda* written in Wiltshire in 1420, *-eth* appears in the indica-

<sup>1</sup> This phrase of Sweet's [see p. 4 above] in the introduction to the *Cura Pastoralis* is inapplicable to the South since curtailment here is restricted to the first and second persons.

<sup>2</sup> B. Callenberg, 'Layamon und Orm nach ihren Flexionsverhältnissen verglichen' (Herrig's *Archiv*, LVII, 317 ff.).

<sup>3</sup> H. Noelle, *Die Sprache des altenglischen Gedichts von der Eule und Nachtigall* (Göttingen, 1870, p. 47).

<sup>4</sup> F. Pabst, 'Flexionsverhältnisse bei Robert von Gloucester' (*Anglia*, XIII, 202).

<sup>5</sup> F. Mohr, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu den mittellengl. Legenden aus Gloucestershire* (Bonn, 1888, p. 65).

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tive plural beside the more frequent *-en*.<sup>1</sup> The later use of *-eth* in the indicative and the imperative can be more advantageously considered in connection with the Midland dialect.

The inflection of the present indicative plural in the Kentish is from the earliest times the same as that of the West-Saxon, in contrast with the phonology of the Kentish which corresponds more closely with that of the Mercian. The unconditioned indicative and imperative plural have the inflection *-eð* in the Kentish *Gospels*<sup>2</sup> of the twelfth century, the *Sermons*<sup>3</sup> of the thirteenth century, and the *Ayenbite of Inwyrt*<sup>4</sup> and the poems of William of Shoreham<sup>5</sup> of the fourteenth century. When the pronoun is postpositive, the curtailed ending may be used before *we* and *ge* in both the indicative and the imperative.

<sup>1</sup> W. Heuser, *Die mittlengl. Legenden von St. Editha und St. Ethelreda* (Göttingen, 1887, p. 38).

<sup>2</sup> M. Reimann, *Die Sprache der mittlenglischen Evangelien* (Berlin, 1888, p. 52).

<sup>3</sup> O. Danker, *Die Laut- und Flexionslehre der mittlenglischen Denkmäler* (Strassburg, 1879, p. 42).

<sup>4</sup> Danker, p. 42; M. Konrath, 'Zur Laut- und Flexionslehre des Mittelenglischen' (Herrig's *Archiv*, LXXXVIII, 164-167).

<sup>5</sup> Danker, p. 42; Konrath, pp. 164-167).

## B.—THE INFLECTION OF THE PRESENT PLURAL INDICATIVE IN THE MIDLAND.

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Turning now to the Early Mercian, we find in the *Vespasian Psalter*<sup>1</sup> one form *-(a)ð* for the present indicative plural. This form is used with any subject, whether noun, personal or relative pronoun, or pronominal adjective: *alle ðeoðe ðeowiað him*, 72, 11; *ge slepað*, 67, 4; *alle ða gehyhtað*, 5, 12; *monge arisað*, 3, 2. It is also used if the subject follows the verb: *ne ðorhwuniað ða unrehtwisan*, 5, 6; *lufiað ge*, 4, 3; *onfoð ge*, 67, 17; *ondredað alle*, 65, 9.

But in cases of pronominal postposition, there is in the *Vespasian Psalter* no choice of forms for the present indicative plural such as the Early West-Saxon presents. The ending *-(a)ð* is used whether the personal pronoun precedes or follows, and whether the sentence expresses negation or not.

The same regularity is found in the use of *-en* for the present optative plural. Throughout the *Psalter* there are only two instances of the reduction of *-en* to *-e*, both of which are in the same adhortative construction: *wynsumie we*, 94, 1 and 94, 2.

The other chief text for the Early Mercian, *The Rushworth Gloss to the Gospel of St. Matthew*,<sup>2</sup> is not so conservative in its use of forms in the present indicative plural as is the *Vespasian Psalter*. It is true the *þ*-forms are used, with only a few exceptions in *-n*,<sup>3</sup> but the connecting vowel varies from *a* to *e* (*-aþ*, *-æþ*, *-eþ*),<sup>4</sup> a phenomenon that is characteristic of the Old Northern texts. These forms in *-þ* are used with any subject in the plural, regard-

<sup>1</sup> R. Zeuner, *Die Sprache des kentischen Psalters, Vespasian A. 1* (Halle, 1881, p. 96).

<sup>2</sup> E. M. Brown, *The Language of the Rushworth Gloss to the Gospel of Matthew and the Mercian Dialect* (Göttingen, 1892, II, 40).

<sup>3</sup> Commenting on the occurrence of the *n*-forms, Brown says: 'These seem to be early examples of the "extension" of *-en* to the present indicative plural, which afterwards became "the characteristic feature of the Midland verb."'

<sup>4</sup> The form *-iþ* also occurs in the plural: *ða ðe hie hyngriþ*, 7, 6.



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less of its position: *we habbaþ*, III, 8; *ða ðe eow lufigaþ*, v, 46; *ne gaþ ge*, v, 20; *lifgaþ menn*, IV, 4; *ge forleteþ*, VI, 14.

A chief point of difference between *R'* and the *Vespasian Psalter* is the use of the curtailed form in the indicative. According to Sievers,<sup>1</sup> there is one instance of this kind in *R'*: *sitte git*, xx, 23. But it is probable that *ðonne ge bidde eow*, VI, 5, corresponding to *mið ðy gie gebiddas* of the *Lindisfarne Matthew* and to *cum oratis* of the Latin text, represents a curtailed form in the indicative, the ending having been influenced by the following pronoun *eow*. Compare also in the same context *ðus ge ðonne eow gebiddaþ*, VI, 9, where the form is certainly indicative.

In the loss of *-n* in the present optative plural, *R'* resembles the *Cura Pastoralis* and stands in sharp contrast with the *Vespasian Psalter*. *R'* uses the form in *-e* twenty-three times, whereas in the *Psalter* the *-n* is dropped only twice.

But a marked disagreement with the *Cura Pastoralis* is the constant use<sup>2</sup> of the regular imperative form in *-þ*, instead of the optative *-e(n)*, in negative constructions: *ne doþ ge*, XXIII, 3; *ne wenap ge*, v, 17; *ne beoþ ge*, VI, 16; *ne sellaþ ge*, VII, 6; *ne dæmep ge*, VII, 1. As has been shown, the *Cura Pastoralis* has the curtailed form not only in negative clauses: *ne wene ge*, 353, 21; *ne beo ge*, 325, 8; but also in imperatives without negation: *beo ge*, 189, 22; *gebinde ge*, 345, 17.

This refusal on the part of *R'* to use the curtailed ending in the imperative plural should be brought into connection with the invariable use of *-(a)ð* in the second plural imperative in the *Psalter*.<sup>3</sup> In view of the tendency in the Midland to generalize the ending *-en*, this preservation of the old imperative plural in *-þ* is all the more striking. This is, in reality, the beginning of the obdurate resistance made by the form in *-elþ* to the encroachment of that in *-en*. The *þ*-plural here intrenches itself in the imperative, not to be driven out until the loss of inflectional *-n* had leveled the plural of the optative and the indicative with the imperative singular.

<sup>1</sup> *Angelsächsische Grammatik*,<sup>3</sup> § 360, note 5.

<sup>2</sup> Brown (p. 45) gives three curtailed forms against one hundred and thirty-five in *-þ*.

<sup>3</sup> Zeuner, p. 97.

A marked contrast is presented by the Midland to the conservatism of the South in preserving the *p*-forms in the indicative plural present. In the Midland of the late Old English period, *-þ* had gradually retreated before *-n* until the latter became the normal sign of the plural indicative. As early as the third part of the *Peterborough Chronicle*<sup>1</sup> (A. D. 1132-1154), the form in *-þ* had become extremely rare. In Orrm<sup>2</sup> it is relegated to imperatives when the subject-pronoun precedes the verb or is unexpressed, and *-e(n)* is also the regular inflection of the indicative in the *Debate of the Body and the Soul*<sup>3</sup> dating from the second half of the thirteenth century, the *Lay of Havelock*<sup>4</sup> about 1300, Robert Mannyng of Brunne<sup>5</sup> about 1330, and the language of the Norfolk *Guilds*<sup>6</sup> of 1389.

In the extreme southeast, Kentish influence on the Essex homilies of the thirteenth century caused *-eð* to vary with *-en*;<sup>7</sup> but in the *Story of Genesis and Exodus* of the early thirteenth century only *-en* is used in the plural indicative.<sup>8</sup>

The form in *-en* which appears first in the Northeast Midland soon became the characteristic inflection of the whole Mercian territory. In the West-Midland *Prose Psalter* of the earlier part of the fourteenth century,<sup>9</sup> the *p*-plurals are restricted almost exclusively to imperatives. A study of the inflection of the present

<sup>1</sup> H. Meyer, *Zur Sprache der jüngeren Teile der Chronik von Peterborough* (Jena, 1889, p. 80).

<sup>2</sup> R. Sachse, *Das unorganische E im Orrm zugleich eine Untersuchung über die Flexionsweise Orrms* (Halle, 1881, p. 49).

<sup>3</sup> G. Heesch, *Über Sprache und Versbau des halbsächs. Gedichts, Debate of the Body and the Soul* (Kiel diss., 1884, p. 65).

<sup>4</sup> P. Wohlfeil, *The Lay of Havelok the Dane. Ein Beitrag zur mittellengl. Sprach- und Literaturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1890, pp. 56-57); F. Schmidt, *Zur Heimatbestimmung des Havelok* (Göttingen, 1900, p. 76).

<sup>5</sup> A. W. Zetsche, *Über den I. Teil der Bearbeitung des Roman de Brut des Wace durch Robert Mannyng of Brunne* (Reudnitz-Leipzig, 1887, p. 47).

<sup>6</sup> E. Schultz, *Die Sprache der englischen Gilden aus dem Jahre 1389* (Hildesheim, 1891, p. 37).

<sup>7</sup> A. Krüger, *Sprache und Dialekt der mittellengl. Homilien in der Handschrift B. 14. 52, Trinity Coll., Cambridge* (Erlangen, 1885, p. 39).

<sup>8</sup> Hilmer, *Ueber die Sprache der allengl. Story of Genesis and Exodus* (Sondershausen program, 1876, p. 30).

<sup>9</sup> Bülbring, *The Earliest Complete English Prose Psalter*, E. E. T. S., 97, p. vi.

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indicative and the imperative in the first thirty-five Psalms has yielded the following results.

The plural in *-(e)n* is invariably used in the indicative when the subject is a noun, an adjective, or a relative pronoun: *princes acorden*, II, 2; *mani arisen*, III, 1; *hij pat aften*, II, 13. Not including the substantive verb *ben* which is used alike as the plural of the indicative and of the subjunctive, there are thirty-eight plural indicatives with a relative pronoun-subject. These have without exception the ending *-(e)n*. The distance of the verb from its subject does not affect its inflection: *þe welles of wickedness han*, XVII, 5. Two nouns in the singular used conjointly as subject may require the *-n* form: *my fader and my moder han*, XXVI, 16.

With a personal pronoun-subject, the inflection is usually *-e*: *ge saie* (dicitis), IV, 5; *we have*, XIX, 10; *loue ge*, IV, 3; *hou saie ge*, X, 1. The ending *-en*, however, is used once: *in wiche hij þenchen*, IX, 23, where the Dublin MS. has *þat þey thenche in*. There are only two instances of *-ep* in the indicative plural: *whi douteþ hij*, II, 1, for which the Dublin MS. has *doutyd*, the Vulgate original being *fremuerunt*; and *whereto loue ge ydelnes and secheþ lesyng?* IV, 3.

As a rule the modals, including *willan*, are uninflected in the plural. An exception is seen in XXXIV, 31 where *hij pat wyl* and *hij pat willen* occur in the same verse.

The optative plural usually assumes the inflection *-en*: *fallen hij*, V, 12; *ne gladen hij*, XXXIV, 22, but the *-n* is sometimes curtailed, as *breke we*, II, 3; *þat hij ne speke*, XXXIII, 13. In rare instances the full inflection *-en* has been dropped: *cast we*, II, 3; *Wax alle myn enemyss asshamed*, VI, 10.

The imperative plural has the ending *-ep* both when unconditioned: *understondeþ*, II, 10; *Loueþ*, XXX, 30, and when the subject pronoun stands in direct contact with the verb: *herieþ ge*, XXII, 23; *beþ ge*, XXIII, 7; *willeþ ge nougt* (nolite), XXXI, 11. There is one plural in *-es*, *wraþþes*, IV, 5, and one in *-e*, *take*, II, 12.

In the later Middle English period the dominant inflections of the unconditioned indicative and imperative plural are *-(e)n* and *-eth* respectively. In the Southern part of the Midland *-eth* is also frequently found in the indicative. The ending *-es*, which varies strongly with *-en* in the Northwest, occurs also more frequently

than *-eth* in the imperative plural of *Havelock*.<sup>1</sup> It is often used in both the indicative and the imperative plural by Robert of Brunne, in whose works, as well as in *Havelock*, uninflected forms occasionally occur in the indicative.

During this later period there is scarcely a Midland text that shows the unvaried use of *-e(n)* in the indicative plural. Ten Brink records Chaucer's use of *th*-plurals only in the case of *haveth* and perhaps *gooth*,<sup>2</sup> but the study of Kittredge shows that plurals in *-th* occur in the four chief manuscripts of the *Troilus*,<sup>3</sup>—Campsall, Harleian 2280, Cambridge Gg. 4. 27, and Harleian 3943. Plurals in *-es* occur in only the first two of these and may be confidently attributed to the scribes. Manly's study of the *Legend of Good Women*,<sup>4</sup> based on MS. Cambridge Gg. 4. 27, gives plurals in *-th* but none in *-es*. Likewise H. C. Ford finds in the *House of Fame*<sup>5</sup> three or possibly four occurrences of the *th*-plural but none of *-es*.

In *Piers the Plowman*, according to E. Bernard,<sup>6</sup> *-eð* and *-en* are used 'indiscriminately' in the indicative plural. Wyclif<sup>7</sup> uses *-(e)n* with occasional *-th*. In the London archives and the state and parliament papers of the later fourteenth and the earlier fifteenth century, the regular inflection is *-e(n)* with occasional *-th*.<sup>8</sup> In the fifteenth century *-eth* occurs beside the more frequent *-e(n)*

<sup>1</sup> Wohlfeil (p. 57) denies that *-es* occurs in the plural indicative in *Havelock*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Language and Metre of Chaucer*.—Second edition, revised by F. Kluge and translated by M. B. Smith (London, 1901, § 187 and § 197). In both the first and the second edition of Ten Brink's grammar and also in the English translation, *goon* is given as the plural of the present indicative and *gooth* as that of the present subjunctive. This, of course, is a mistake.

<sup>3</sup> 'Observations on the Language of Chaucer's *Troilus*' (*Chaucer Society's Publications*, Second Ser., 28, §§ 97 and 124).

<sup>4</sup> 'Observations on the Language of the *Legend of Good Women*' (*Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, II, §§ 97 and 98).

<sup>5</sup> *Observations on the Language of Chaucer's House of Fame* (Roanoke, 1899, §§ 97 and 98).

<sup>6</sup> William Langland: *A grammatical Treatise* (Bonn, 1874, p. 77); also R. Kron, *William Langley's Buch von Peter dem Pflüger* (Erlangen, 1885, p. 59).

<sup>7</sup> H. Fischer, *Ueber die Sprache John Wyclif's*,—*Laut- und Flexionslehre* (Halle, 1880, p. 61); E. Gasner, *Beiträge zum Entwicklungsgang der neuengl. Schriftsprache auf Grund der mittellengl. Bibelversionen wie sie auf Wyclif und Purvey zurückgehen sollen* (Nürnberg, 1891, p. 27).

<sup>8</sup> Morsbach, *Ueber den Ursprung der neuengl. Schriftsprache* (Heilbronn, 1888, p. 134 and pp. 136-137).

in Palladius,<sup>1</sup> in Pecock,<sup>2</sup> and in the *Coventry Plays* and archives.<sup>3</sup> In Caxton the predominant inflection is *-e(n)*, but *-eth* also occurs.<sup>4</sup> He reveals a tendency to use *-e* with a pronominal, but *-en* with a substantival subject—a tendency that finds a parallel not only in the use of the Northern *-e* and *-es*, as Römstedt suggests,<sup>5</sup> but also in the use of *-e* and *-en* in the West-Midland *Prose Psalter* mentioned above.

In the sixteenth century,<sup>6</sup> *th*-endings are still frequent in the Midland, and occur in the early part of the seventeenth century in the language of Shakespeare<sup>7</sup> and his contemporaries.<sup>8</sup>

The Midland inflection *-en* of the present indicative plural is due to a transference to the indicative of a form that originally belonged to the optative.<sup>9</sup> We have seen that in classic West-Saxon this borrowed optative form was restricted in the indicative to verbs with a postpositive pronoun of the first or second persons, in which case the ending *-en* was curtailed to *-e*. We shall see in the next chapter that this curtailed form was used in Early

<sup>1</sup> C. Struever, *Die mittellengl. Uebersetzung des Palladius* (Halle, 1887, p. 81).

<sup>2</sup> A. Hoffmann, *Laut- und Formenlehre in Reginald Pecock's Repressor* (Greifswald, 1900, p. 61).

<sup>3</sup> M. Kramer, *Sprache und Heimat der sogen. Ludus Coventrie* (Halle, 1892, pp. 54–5).

<sup>4</sup> H. Römstedt, *Die englische Schriftsprache bei Caxton* (Göttingen, 1891, p. 46).

<sup>5</sup> Römstedt says: 'Auffallend an den Gebrauch des nördlichen *-e* und *-es* erinnert es, dass blosses *-e* beim Pronomen, *-en* beim Substantiv beliebter scheint.'

<sup>6</sup> Mätzner, <sup>3</sup> I, 361; Brandl, 'Quellen des weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare' (*Quellen und Forschungen*, lxxx, p. lxxxii).

<sup>7</sup> Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar* (London and New York, 1888, pp. 234–237); Franz, *Shakespeare-Grammatik* (Halle, 1900, p. 3 and p. 20).

<sup>8</sup> K. Pollert, *Die 3. Person Pluralis auf -s bei Shakespeare* (Marburg, 1881, pp. 58–59); Lounsbury, *History of the English Language* (New York, 1894, p. 414).

<sup>9</sup> T. Müller, *Angelsächsische Grammatik* (Göttingen, 1883, p. 226); Sweet, *A New English Grammar* (Oxford, 1892, § 1230).

A similar encroachment of the inflection of the optative plural on that of the indicative plural is found in Middle Low German. From 1350 to 1450 *-et* and *-en* are used interchangeably in the indicative, but in the second half of the fifteenth century the *-en* forms are almost exclusively used.—H. Tümpel, 'Die Mundarten des alten niedersächsischen Gebietes zwischen 1300 und 1500 nach den Urkunden dargestellt' (*Beiträge*, VII, 90).

At the present day in the dialects west of the Elbe, *-et* is the regular inflection of the first and third plural indicative; whereas in the dialects to the east of that river, *-en* is used in these persons.—O. Behaghel, Paul's *Grundriss*, <sup>2</sup> I, 664.

Northumbrian not only with postpositive pronouns of all three persons but also in cases of pronominal pre-position. The Midland does not go to this extreme but mediates between the conservatism of the South and the syntactic freedom of inflection characteristic of the North. As has been pointed out, the West-Midland *Prose Psalter*, in harmony with the Northern usage, adopts the curtailed form of the verb whether the personal pronominal subject precedes or follows. But in Orm the curtailed form in the present indicative is restricted to pronominal postposition: *we don*, 425; *gitt nilenn*, 6220, but *bidde we*, 5356; *folghe gitt*, 6208. Although in the present indicative, the curtailment is further restricted to the first and second persons as in West-Saxon, in the preterit, forms like *haffde þegg*, 551 may occur beside *haffdenn þegg*, 1066; *gæfe þegg*, 19757 beside *gæfenn þegg*, 19747. With postpositive *we* and *ge* of the present and preterit indicative, the adhortative optative, and the imperative, *-en* is not used: *beo ge*, 3348; *wite ge*, 3357; *ga we*, 3390; *loke we*, 3392; *ne wiste ge*, 8951; *ne do ge*, 9306; *mughe we*, 9323; *mihhte we*, 11479. Although the curtailed endings are usual with a postpositive pronoun in the *Genesis and Exodus*,—*sule ge*, 2188, 2303; *haue ge*, 2315; *haue we*, 3314, 3542,—the full form may also be used, *sulen ge*, 2354; but this is exceptional. Here also the curtailed form may be extended to the third person, but more freely than in Orm: *wulde he*, 3766; *þe . . . sule*, 305 (compare 3770). However, in the majority of third persons the full form occurs: *delen he*, 151; *sulen he*, 1087; *he witen*, 74; *he haue*, 3555.

This varying usage in the earlier texts of the Middle English period indicates the progress of the optative *-e(n)* in establishing itself in the indicative. The influence of the postpositive *we* and *ge* favored the form *-e*; but these were greatly in the minority compared with the prepositive pronouns and the third-personal nouns and relatives. Thus *-en* became established as the norm, with *-e* as a possible variation under definite conditions. The force of pronominal postposition is seen in the use of the curtailed form not only in the indicative plural and the imperative but also in the preteritive presents, the preterit indicative, and, where leveling with the singular has not already taken place, in the present and preterit subjunctive as well.

In view of this demonstrable development of the Midland *-en* from its origin in the adhortative optative, it is obviously inaccurate to assert that the *-en* was carried over into the indicative in order to distinguish between the plural and the third singular, both of which would otherwise have ended in *-eth*.<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen above, already in the *Rushworth Gloss to St. Matthew* the *-en* of the optative plural was frequently curtailed to *-e*. The culmination of this process is seen in the *Orrmulum*<sup>2</sup> where the optative plural is completely leveled with the singular, as was the case in Early Northumbrian. But in the third part of the *Peterborough Chronicle*<sup>3</sup> and especially in *The Story of Genesis and Exodus*,<sup>4</sup> the full form in *-en* is frequently used.

The *-en* of the unconditioned indicative plural present is more successful than that of the optative in resisting the tendency towards curtailment, and in many Midland texts the preservation of the *-n* is the distinguishing mark between the two moods.<sup>5</sup> The *e*-form in the indicative plural had, however, come down from the Early Mercian by lineal descent in cases of pronominal postposition in the first and second persons, and was gradually strengthened by the analogy of the numerous curtailed optatives and by the tendency in the language itself to drop final *-n* in unaccented syllables. This tendency was very active in the time of Chaucer,<sup>6</sup> and continued to operate through the whole later Middle English period.<sup>7</sup>

Important testimony on the date of the passing of *-en* is furnished by Ben Jonson, who asserts that the present indicative plural in *-en* was used until about the reign of Henry VIII (1509–1547), and complains that the form of the plural had in his own day become identical with that of the first person singular.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> O. F. Emerson, *The History of the English Language* (New York, 1897, p. 375); M. Kaluza, *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache* (Berlin, 1901, § 326).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sachse, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Meyer, p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> Hilmer, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Zetzche, p. 47; Bernard, p. 77; Hoffman, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Ten Brink, §§ 117, 186, 188, 190, 193, 194, 196, 261, etc.; Morsbach, *Neuengl. Schriftsprache*, p. 159.

<sup>7</sup> The loss of the resultant final *-e* can not be considered apart from the study of metrics and will not therefore be discussed here.

<sup>8</sup> Jonson says in his *English Grammar* (ed. W. Gifford, *The Works of Ben Jonson*, London, 1816, vol. ix, p. 305): 'But now, whatsoever is the cause, it hath quite grown out of use, and that other so generally prevailed, that I dare not presume to set this afoot again; albeit, to tell you my opinion, I am persuaded that the lack hereof, well considered, will be found a great blemish to our tongue.'

A revival of *-en* is seen in the poetry of Spenser<sup>1</sup> and his imitators,<sup>2</sup> but it had long passed altogether from the popular speech.

With the passage of inflectional *-en* from the Middle English verb, the feeling for its proper use became dulled. Writers who have attempted to use the archaic language of the Midland have frequently been led into absurd mistakes by neglecting to recognize the grammatical value of this *-en*. Some remarkable blunders of this kind occur in the *Court of Love*:<sup>3</sup> Wheder that she me *helden* lefe or loth, 847; I *kepen* in no wyse, 684; For if by me this mater *springen* out, 725; thay *kepten* been, 526, in which *kepten* is a past participle.

Nor have editors of Middle English texts been wholly free from this fault. Urry betrays his ignorance of the value of the Midland *-en* by giving such forms as these in his edition of Chaucer: 'And rage he couth as it *werin* a whelpe;' 'Of studie *lookin* he most cure and hede;' 'This duke of whome I *makin* mencion.'<sup>4</sup>

The Midland, by virtue of its geographical position, possessed, in addition to *-en* and *-eth*, a plural inflection *-es* that has been explained as due either to the borrowing of the Northern plural *-es*<sup>5</sup> or to the preponderating influence of the Midland third singular.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> G. Wagner, *On Spenser's Use of Archaisms* (Halle, 1879, p. 45).

<sup>2</sup> Lounsbury, *The English Language*, p. 412.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Skeat, *Chaucerian and Other Pieces* (being a supplement to the *Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*), Oxford, 1897, p. 409. See also Skeat's account of the misuse of *-en*, p. lxxvii, on which the paragraph above is based.

<sup>4</sup> J. Urry, *Chaucer's Works*, London, 1871.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer* (New York, 1892, I, p. 287).

<sup>6</sup> Mätzner, I, 362; Franz, pp. 403-4; Lounsbury, *History of the English Language*, p. 413.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Pollert, *Die 3. Person Pluralis auf -s bei Shakespeare*, p. 59; Brandl, *l. c.* p. lxxxii.

Prof. C. Alphonso Smith ('Shakespeare's Present Indicative *s*-Endings with Plural Subjects,' *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, XI, 363-376, followed by 'The Chief Difference between the First and Second Folios of Shakespeare,' *Englische Studien*, xxx, 1-20) maintains 'that in *is*, *was*, *-s* and *-th*, used with plural subjects, we have not instances of borrowing, but evidence rather of a tendency on the part of the third indicative singular, unchecked by the formal laws of a grammar-making age, to establish itself as the norm, and thus to usurp the place held by the indicative plural.' Storm (*Englische Philologie*,<sup>8</sup> I, 807) gives a similar explanation: 'Shakespeare, der geborene Mittelländer, scheint von der in der südenglischen Volkssprache herrschenden Verwirrung bisweilen berührt zu sein, und teils aus Unachtsamkeit, teils um die Volkssprache nachzuahmen, teils dem Reim zu Liebe den Singular für den Plural zu gebrauchen.'



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Although the usage of a singular verb with a plural subject was common in the North (as will be shown in the next chapter) and was doubtless of frequent occurrence in the Midland and the South as well,<sup>1</sup> yet the leveling of singular and plural forms was never as general in the Midland as in the North. The fact that the use of the *s*-plural in the Midland is largely restricted to the speech of the uneducated seems to point to the carrying over of the *-s* of the third singular into the plural, a process aided by the old usage of a singular predicate with a compound subject. But this *-s* of the singular is not indigenous to the Midland and, like that of the plural, is to be explained as an invasion of the Midland by the inflections of the North.

<sup>1</sup> In the Northern and the Southern of the Middle English period the plural and the third singular fell together except in the case of *is* and *was*, thus rendering all discussion of this point for these dialects largely speculative.

A striking parallel to this invasion of the plural by the singular inflection is presented by the modern Scandinavian. In regard to this, J. A. Lundell (Paul's *Grundriss*,<sup>2</sup> I, 1488) says: 'Im Verb ist (ausser Fär.-Isl.) der Konj. im Schwinden —im Ostschwed. gibt es davon keine Spur mehr,—ebenso besondere Pluralform im Indik.: in finländ., schwed. (etwa Halland und das südlichste Westergötland ausgenommen) und dänischen Mundarten (ein paar schleswigsche Kirchspiele ausgenommen) wird die Sing.-Form immer, in Norwegen gewöhnlich auch bei pluralem Subjekt verwandt.'

## C.—THE INFLECTION OF THE PRESENT PLURAL INDICATIVE IN THE NORTH.

### I. THE LEADING EXPLANATIONS OF THE NORTHERN INFLECTIONS.

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Retracing our steps, we find in Bouterwek's *Die Vier Evangelien in Altnordhumbrischer Sprache* (Gütersloh, 1857, p. cliv), the occurrence of vocalic endings in the North explained in the following manner :

In the Anglo-Saxon conjugation the ending *-on*, *-en* occurs in the plural of the preterit indicative and of the present and preterit subjunctive. In these forms the *-n* is very often lost in Northumbrian, in consequence of which the plural of the preterit subjunctive has the same form as the singular. The plural present indicative of *wosa*, *esse* also shares in this process, particularly in the second person when the personal pronoun *ge* follows and is enclitically attached to the verb: *ue ne aru ue*, *nos non sumus*, *John VIII*, 41; *aro ge* or *gie* instead of *aron ge* or *gie*, *estis*; also once *bīðo*, *sunt*, *Mark III*, 28.

In a similar vein is the language of Sievers (*Angelsächsische Grammatik*, Halle, 1882, § 360, note):

Originally this apocope was restricted to final *-n*, that is, it affected only the adhortative forms of the present (*-an* and optative *-en*, the latter especially frequent with negative imperatives) and the whole preterit; in Northumbrian and the *Psalter*, *-e* for *-að* is therefore wholly wanting; in West-Saxon, on the contrary, the curtailment has been carried over also into the indicative and the real imperative.

In the second edition (1886) of Sievers's grammar, this is repeated without alteration, but in the third edition (1898) a marked change has been made.

Originally the curtailment affected only the verb-forms in *-n*, that is, the adhortative forms of the present (the real adhortative *-an* of the first plural as well as the optative *-en*, the latter especially frequent with negative imperatives), the optative and the preterit (including the

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present forms of the preteritive presents). From these *n*-forms the curtailment is then analogically carried over also to the original *-að*-forms. In this process the optative especially seems to have served as a pattern for the indicative (compare the West-Saxon *hæbbe wē*, but also forms like the indicative *habbon wē*, imperative *nallon gē* beside *nallað gē*, *R*<sup>2</sup>). Only in the South has the carrying over of curtailed forms into the indicative and the imperative proper taken place to a considerable degree: already in the *Cura Pastoralis* the *-e* predominates. The Anglian dialects, on the other hand, present numerous short forms for old *-en*, *-an*, *-un*, but still preserve old *-að wē*, *gē*, etc., in the main unimpaired; however, *R*<sup>1</sup> has exceptionally an indicative *sitte git*, *R*<sup>2</sup> an indicative *forstonde wē* (with which compare the indicative *habbon wē*, imperative *nallon gē* beside the usual *nallað gē*); each of the *Lindisfarne Gospels* an indicative, *nabbo wē*, *walla wē*, and *walli gē*. Curtailed forms occur with somewhat greater frequency in the *Ritual*, where the Latin original would lead one to expect an indicative present.

Attention had previously been called to the occurrence of vocalic forms in the *Ritual* by U. Lindelöf (*Die Sprache des Rituals von Durham*, Helsingfors, 1890, p. 78). After recording the fact that the number of *þ*-forms in the present indicative plural exceeds that of the *s*-forms, Lindelöf says:

Besides these formations there are in the *Ritual* a considerable number of present plurals, which end in a vowel (*-a* or *-e*). In West-Saxon, as is well known, there frequently occurs instead of *-að* a shorter ending *-e*, if one of the pronouns *we* or *ge* immediately follows the verb. According to Sievers, this *-e* for *-að* is not found in the North, this dialect apocopating only forms in original final *-n*. The *Ritual*, however, does not confirm this assertion; there are found in it various instances of curtailed forms (ending in *-a* or *-e*) which we must probably regard as indicatives; e. g. *bidde ve* (precamur), 162,2; *gifylga ve* (prosequimur), 71,10; *gimersiga ve* (celebramus), 48,20; *habba ve*, 89,2; 91,3; *gifeaia ve* (gaudemus), 93,3. Yet it must be granted that the glossator could have perhaps construed a few of these forms as subjunctives. Aside from the cases mentioned, there are still some instances of vocalic endings in the plural that translate Latin present plural indicatives: *we bihaldæ* (abstinemus), 17,7; *ve deadiga* (mori-mur), 26,19; *we deadia* and *we lifia*, 26,20; etc. Whether these forms are meant to be real subjunctives or whether they are to be

regarded merely as analogical formations on the subjunctive, I do not venture to decide.

A detailed consideration of these vocalic forms in the *Ritual* is given in the following chapter.

The few vocalic endings recorded by Miss Elizabeth Mary Lea ('The Language of the Northumbrian Gloss to the *Gospel of St. Mark*,' *Anglia*, xvi, p. 140) are chiefly preteritive presents. 'In cases where one of the Pronouns *wē* or *gē* stands immediately after the verb, as a rule the ordinary plural form in *-að*, *-as* is found.' The forms in *-þ* predominate slightly over those in *-s*.

Similar results are obtained by H. Fücksel ('Die sprache der Northumbrischen interlinearversion zum *Johannes-Evangelium*,' *Anglia*, xxiv, 61).

Both of these monographs corroborate the remark of Sievers (*Angelsächsische Grammatik*,<sup>3</sup> § 354, note 2) that in the Northern texts the inflection of the verb has been thrown into great confusion, either through the actual process of decomposition in the language itself or through the sheer awkwardness of the glossators in rendering the Latin forms of the original.

Sievers (§ 358, note 2) had asserted concerning the second and third singular indicative :

In Northumbrian, *a* and, less frequently in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* and the *Ritual*, also *æ* occur beside the usual *e*, in consequence of confusion with the endings of the second weak conjugation. Thus there stand side by side forms like the second singular *bindes* and *bindas*, *-æs* (*Gospels*, *bindeð*, *-að*, *-æð*), third singular *bindeð*, *-es* and *bindað*, *-æð* or *bindas*, *-æs*.

But Lindelöf in his new study, *Die Südnorthumbrische Mundart des 10. Jahrhunderts: Die Sprache der sog. Glosse Rushworth*<sup>2</sup> (*Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik*, x, 129), comments as follows on the occurrence of *-að* twenty-three times and *-as* nine times in the third person singular of the present indicative :

In the occurrence of these endings, I should not like so much to see the influence of the weak verbs of the second class (compare Sievers, § 358, note 2) as the employment of plural forms in the singular. All the forms in *-að*, *-as* adduced above have a decidedly plural aspect

(*o*-umlaut in *niomað*, *cweoðað* etc., *u* in *cumað* contrasted with the singular *cymeð*, etc.). In *Ru.*<sup>2</sup> the indicative plural present and the second plural imperative end in *-að* (c. 120) or *-as* (c. 145). . . . Besides these, the ending *-eð* occurs seventeen times and the ending *-es* seven times. . . . Here it is certainly not a question of the weakening of the final vowel or of the carrying over of the singular ending, but, as the forms *cymeð*, *cweðeð*, etc. demonstrate, it is a case of the use of the singular form in a plural function. Also when the pronouns *we*, *ge* immediately follow, *Ru.*<sup>2</sup> regularly preserves the ending *-að*, *-as*; yet *forstonde we* occurs once.

Many attempts have been made to account for the *s*-forms of the present indicative plural in Old Northumbrian. Bouterwek (p. cxlvi) thinks the interchange of *-s* and *-ð* indicates an arbitrary pronunciation of *-ð*. Murray says :<sup>1</sup>

‘The Greek not only expels the *n*, but, like the Northern English and Scotch, changes the dental into *s*, *φep-ovσι*, for *φep-ovvτι*, Latin *fer-unt*, Sanscrit *bhar-anti*, M. Goth. *bair-and*, Ags. *ber-að*, Old Midl. Eng. *ber-en*, Old Southern *ber-eth*, Old Northern *ber-es*.’

Sweet says (*History of English Sounds*, Oxford, 1888, § 526):

‘The change of final *þ* into *s* in verb-inflections in l. North., as in *bindes*, *bindas* = WS *bint* (Angl. *bindeþ*), *bindaþ* seems to be organic, as there do not seem to be any analogical influences at work.’

This view appears to have the support of Bülbring (*Altenglisches Elementarbuch,—I. Teil: Lautlehre*, Heidelberg, 1902, § 569):

Final *þ* of the unaccented endings *-eþ* and *-aþ* in the third singular and the plural present frequently passes over into *s* in late Northumbrian: third singular *bindeð*, *bindes*, ‘binds,’ plural *bindað*, *bindas*, imperative plural *farað*, *faras*, ‘go.’

The principles that regulate the use of the different inflections of the present plural indicative in Middle Northern have, in their broad outlines, been clearly stated by Murray (*The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland*, p. 211 ff.):

<sup>1</sup> *The Dialect of the Southern Counties of Scotland* (*Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1870–72, p. 212).

'In the present tense, *aa leyke, wey leyke, yee leyke, thay leyke*, are used only when the verb is accompanied by its proper pronoun; when the subject is a noun, adjective, interrogative or relative pronoun, or when the verb and subject are separated by a clause, the verb takes the termination *-s* in all persons. Thus "*aa cum fyrst; yt's mey ȁt cums fyrst; wey gang theare; huz tweae quheyles gangs theare; yt's huz ȁt says seae; ye sey quhat thay mein; yuw eanes says quhat thir meins.*" . . . In the Old North-Anglian, the conjugation was:—

Ih cyme	we cym-es	} or cyme we, gee, pa
ȝu cym-es	gee cym-es	
he cym-es	hea or ȝa cym-es	

But before the date of the earliest Northern writings of the 13th century, the form without the *-s* had been extended to all cases in which the verb was accompanied by its proper pronoun, whether before or after it, leaving the full form in *-s* to be used with other nominatives only.'

So nearly definitive was the work of Murray as regards the verb forms in Middle Northern that no fuller explanation of the varying inflections in the indicative present has appeared since the publication of his study. Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith follows Murray in her *Introduction to the York Plays* (Oxford, 1885, p. lxxii), citing as variant forms *we (ge, ȝai) syng(e)* but *we (ge, ȝai) that synges; ȝe briddes synges; we ga hame and tas reste*.

It may be presumed that Schleich was not acquainted with the work of Murray, when, in his edition of *Ywain and Gawain* (Oppeln and Leipzig, 1887, p. xviii), he made the following assertions concerning the forms of the indicative present:

The whole plural is in the main uninflected. In the rimes I have found only one instance each of the second and third person standing without inflection, namely *ge knaw* (: *thraw*, 2362) and *ȝai dwell* (: *omell*, 1435). . . . Moreover, the ending *s, es* is frequently found but is never certified by the rime: compare *we suffers*, 3044; *ge thinkes*, 1530, 1538; *ȝai herkens*, 4; *uses*, 36; *makes*, 37, 39; *greves*, 508; *findes*, 1656; *has* 1655, etc.

But the phrase in l. 3044 is not *we suffers* as Schleich asserts. Together with the preceding line, it reads:—*ȝan sal we pas al*

heþin quite, *þat* here *suffers* al this desþite; ll. 1530 and 1538:—*Whils ge* it *have* and *thinkes* on me; l. 4:—*þat herkens* Ywayne and Gawayne; l. 36:—*men uses*; ll. 37 and 39:—*men makes*; l. 508:—His *wordes greves* me right noght. All the other instances adduced by Schleich are cases in which the subject is either a noun or a relative and in which, consequently, the form without *-s* would have been as great an irregularity as the form with *-s* would have been when the personal pronoun immediately precedes the verb.

In the following monographs no attempt has been made to ascertain more accurately than Murray had done the principles underlying the difference in usage of the Northern inflected and uninflected forms. The authors of many of these studies are concerned only secondarily with questions of inflection and should not therefore be expected to advance our knowledge on this point. Some do not appear to be aware of Murray's work and generalize on the endings of the plural without any reference to the nature of the subject of the verb. Others who make a distinction in this respect have evidently overlooked the fact that the inflection of a Northern verb is affected by the distance from its pronominal subject.

A. Ackermann, *Die Sprache der ältesten schottischen Urkunden, A. D. 1385–1440* (Berlin, 1897).

M. Adler, *Über die Richard Rolle de Hampole zugeschriebene Paraphrase der sieben Busspsalmen* (Altenburg, 1885, p. 9).

Ida Baumann, *Die Sprache der Urkunden aus Yorkshire im 15. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg, 1902, p. 101).

F. J. Bierbaum, *Über Lawrence Minot und seine Lieder* (Halle, 1876, p. 37).

K. Bøddeker, 'Über die Sprache der *Benediktinerregel*' (*Englische Studien*, II, 376).

G. Brade, *Über Huchown's Pistil of Swete Susan* (Breslau, 1892, p. 17).

P. Buss, 'Sind die von Horstmann herausgegebenen schottischen *Legenden* ein Werk Barbere's?' (*Anglia*, IX, 510).

C. L. Crow, *Zur Geschichte des kurzen Reimpaars im Mittlenglischen* (Göttingen, 1892, p. 28).

B. Dannenberg, *Metrik und Sprache der mittlengl. Romanze, The Sege off Melayne* (Göttingen, 1890, p. 43).

- A. R. Diebler, *Henrisone's Fabeldichtungen* (Halle, 1885, p. 31).
- R. Eule, *Untersuchungen über die nordengl. Version des Octavian* (Halle diss., 1889).
- G. T. Flom, *Scandinavian Influence on Southern Lowland Scotch* (New York, 1900).
- H. Gerken, *Die Sprache des Bischofs Douglas von Dunkeld (Vocalismus und Consonantismus der Reimwörter) nebst Anhang: Zur Echtheitsfrage des King Hart* (Strassburg, 1898).
- J. Gutmann, *Untersuchungen über das mittlengl. Gedicht, The Buke of the Howlat* (Halle, 1892, pp. 36-37).
- W. Hagedorn, *Über die Sprache einiger nördlicher Chaucerschüler* (Göttingen, 1892).
- J. B. Henneman, *Untersuchungen über das mittlengl. Gedicht, Wars of Alexander* (Berlin, 1889).
- F. H. Henschel, *Darstellung der Flexionslehre in John Barbour's Bruce* (Leipzig, 1886, p. 69).
- A. Herrmann, *Untersuchungen über das schottische Alexanderbuch* (Halle, 1893, p. 48).
- O. Herttrich, *Studien zu den York Plays* (Breslau, 1886).
- R. H. Hudnall, *A Presentation of the Grammatical Inflections in Andrew of Wyntoun's Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* (Leipzig, 1898, p. 90).
- P. Kamann, *Über Quellen und Sprache der York Plays* (Halle, 1876, p. 37).
- J. Kaufmann, *Traité de la Langue du Poète écossais William Dunbar* (Bonn, 1873, p. 95).
- G. Knauff, *Studien über Sir David Lyndsay* (Berlin, 1885).
- H. Köster, *Huchown's Pistel of Swete Susan*,—*Kritische Ausgabe* (Strassburg, 1895, I, 59).
- O. Lengert, *Die schottische Romanze Roswall and Lillian* (Leipzig, 1892).
- H. Lessmann, *Studien zu dem mittlengl. Life of St. Outhbert* (Darmstadt, 1896).
- H. Lübke, *The Auntes of Arthur at the Tern-Wathelan* (Berlin, 1883).
- F. Mennicken, 'Versbau und Sprache in Huchown's *Morte Arthure*' (*Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik*, v, 119).
- O. Noltmeier, *Über die Sprache des Gedichts, The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane* (Marburg, 1889, p. 52).
- L. Ostermann, 'Untersuchungen zu *Ratis Raving* und dem Gedicht, *The Thewis of Gud Women*' (*Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik*, xii, 61).



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M. L. Perrin, *Über Thomas Castelford's Chronik von England* (Boston, 1891, pp. 26-27).

W. P. Reeves, *A Study in the Language of Scottish Prose before 1600* (Baltimore, 1893).

G. Reichel, *Studien zu der schottischen Romanze, The History of Sir Eger, Sir Grime, and Sir Gray-Steel* (Darmstadt, 1893).

O. Retzlaff, *Untersuchungen über den nordengl. Legendencyclus der MSS. Harleian 4196 und Cotton. Tib. E VII.* (Berlin, 1888, p. 50).

W. Scholle, *Laurence Minot's Lieder* (Strassburg, 1884, p. xxiv).

H. Steffens, 'Versbau und Sprache des mittellengl. stabreimenden Gedichtes, *The Wars of Alexander*' (*Bonner Beiträge zur Anglistik*, ix).

M. Tonndorf, *Rauf Coilyear, Ein mittelschottisches Gedicht* (Halle, 1893, p. 39).

J. Ullmann, 'Studien zu Richard Rolle de Hampole' (*Englische Studien*, vii, 427).

H. Wende, *Überlieferung und Sprache der mittellengl. Version des Psalters und ihr Verhältnis zur lateinischen Vorlage* (Breslau, 1884).

W. Wischmann, *Untersuchungen über das Kingis Quair Jacobs I. von Schottland* (Wismar, 1887, pp. 17-20).

A. Zielke, *Untersuchungen zu Sir Eglamour of Artois* (Kiel, 1889).

## II. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHERN INFLECTIONS OF THE PRESENT PLURAL INDICATIVE.

### 1. *The Old Northumbrian.*

From the preceding sections it has been seen that the *Durham Ritual* presents a more advanced, that is a more nearly modern, stage of inflection than does any other Early Northumbrian text. It is also evident that the choice of present indicative plural endings in Middle Northern is determined solely by syntactic conditions. Can it be that these conditions were in any degree present in Old Northumbrian? If so, when and how did they first manifest themselves and what was their historical development? These questions constitute the main subject of study in the present chapter.

#### *Durham Ritual*.<sup>1</sup>

#### A. Endings in -ð.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Stevenson, *Publications of the Surtees Society*, London, 1839.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout this chapter no attempt is made to enumerate all the endings unless it is so stated.

1. Noun-subject: *cynningas giseað*, 55,19; *soðfæsto . . . liofað*, 92,3; *onginnað blædsungas*, 126,1; *giscineð soðfæsto*, 86,17.
2. Adjective-subject: *alle giherað*, 89,2; *allo . . . iornað*, 5,17; *gihergað mengo* (multi), 85,7.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða ðe gibrucað*, 99,2; *ða ðe fylgað*, 113,2; *ða ðe . . . heriað*, 113,1.
4. Personal pronoun-subject: *we biddað*, 4,13; *we gitrymmeð*, 11,12; *we ongeattað*, 42,18; *hia onfæð*, 92,9; *gie . . . giwæpnigað*, 21,19.
5. Subject unexpressed: *sæcað*, 5,9; *giherað*, 48,2; *sellað*, 187,17.

B. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: None.
2. Adjective-subject: None.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða ðe . . . sittes*, 168,6; *ða ðe meo giehtas*, 168,4.
4. Personal pronoun-subject: *we biddas*, 2,9; *gie stondas*, 60,1; *we ondredes ðec and sæcas*, 125,7; *wutas gie*, 24,18; *of'timbras gie*, 82,16.
5. Subject unexpressed: *gionwældas*, 86,18; *f'letas*, 93,6; *doas*, 176,19.

C. Vocalic endings.<sup>1</sup>

1. Noun-subject: None.
2. Adjective-subject: None.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: None.
4. Personal pronoun-subject.—(a) Verb + pronoun: *bidde we* (precatur), 162,2; *gidæ we* (faciemus), 4,2; (agimus), 36,14; *gifecia we* (gaudemus), 93,3; *gifylga we* (prosequimur), 71,10; *habba we* (habemus), 89,2; 91,3; *gihreme we* (imploramus), 37,2; *gimersiga we* (celebramus), 48,20; 82,2; *giscrinca hia* (arrescunt), 125,18. To these may be added *aro gie* (estis), 27,12; 28,12, and *naro gie* (non estis), 107,3, contrasted with *ne aron gie*, 82,15.
- (b) Pronoun + verb: *we agefe* (exhibemus), 9,1; *we bihalda usig* (abstinemus), 17,7; *hia giclænsigo* (castigant), 18,8; *we*

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the preteritive presents, all the vocalic forms of the present that gloss Latin indicative plurals are recorded.

*deadi(g)a* (morimur), 26,19 and 20; *gie gidæ* (facitis), 14,1; *we giearnia* (meremur), 8,18 (Skeat's collation<sup>1</sup>); 40,19; 41,2; *we gifeai(g)a* (gaudemus), 54,16, 75,10; *we gifeagu*, 52,14; *we gifylga* (exequimur), 34,7; *we lifia* (vivimus), 26,20; *we lifiga* (vivemus), 26,15; *we (gi)mersia* (celebramus), 9,16; 69,12; 75,4; 89,8 and 16; *eft we nivaia* (recensemus), 87,5; *we onfæ* (suscipimus), 87,6; *we gisomniga* (congregamur), 172,4; *we giðoncia* (gratulamur), 74,4; *we worði(g)a* (veneramur), 64,2 and 9; 67,4; 74,17; 89,13; (adoramus), 71,16 (Skeat's collation).

Vocalic endings occur twice when the subject-pronoun is not expressed: *gigladiga* (letamur), 49,9 and *gimersia* (celebramus), 84,2.

We have, then, in the *Durham Ritual* forty-six vocalic forms that translate plural indicatives of the Latin text. That the translator correctly construed the sense of the original is proved by the fact that these verbs are properly translated when they occur elsewhere in the text. For example, *non habemus pontificem*, 91,3 is glossed by *ne habba we heh bisc,* whereas in the preceding verse *habemus pontificem* is rendered by *we habbað heh bisc.* To maintain that the glossator understood the Latin in the one case but not in the other would be absurd. It is true that only a few cases are as plain as this, but it may be confidently held nevertheless that the majority of these vocalic forms are indicatives.<sup>2</sup>

That these curtailed forms were carried over into the indicative from the optative with the consequent dropping not of *-þ* but of *-n*, has been shown in the treatment of the West-Saxon. The influence of the preteritive presents and of *willan*, itself originally an optative, in producing this result has also been considered. With these must be associated in the Northern the plural *aron* which readily lent itself to curtailment.

The categories given above show that the curtailed form is used not only when the pronominal subject is postpositive but when it is prepositive as well. No parallel for such an advanced stage of inflection is found in the Early Midland or in the Early or Middle

<sup>1</sup> *The Philological Society's Transactions*, 1879, Appendix II.

<sup>2</sup> Lindelöf (*Die Sprache des Rituals von Durham*, p. 78) concludes his discussion by saying, 'Ob diese Formen wirkliche Conjunctive sein sollen, oder ob sie nur als Analogiebildungen nach dem Conjunctiv anzusehen sind, wage ich nicht zu entscheiden.'

Southern. A similar procedure in Anglo-Saxon is found only in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* of Bernicia, but they are in this respect much more conservative than the *Ritual*.

*Lindisfarne Gospels.*<sup>1</sup>—*Matthew*.

A. Endings in -ð.

1. Noun-subject: *witgo arisað*, XXIV, 11; *wæras geteleð*, XII, 41; *ðeafas . . . forstelað*, VI, 20.

2. Adjective-subject: *alle niomað*, XIX, 11; *alle . . . habbað*, XXI, 26; *monig . . . cymmeð*, XXIV, 5.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða ðe hyncgrað*, V, 6; *ða . . . cyðað*, XXVII, 62.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *hia geseað*, XIII, 16; *we getrewað*, XXVIII, 14; *wallað gie*, XX, 32.

5. Subject unexpressed: *lufað*, XXIII, 6.

B. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *legeras geuycas*, VI, 2; *hwælpas brucas*, XV, 27; *duro forestondes*, XVI, 18; *cweðas menn*, XVI, 13; *cymes . . . dagas*, IX, 15.

2. Adjective-subject: *monige . . . cymas and gehrestas*, VIII, 11.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða widlas*, XV, 20; *ða ðe falles*, XV, 27; *ða ðe . . . utgaas*, XV, 18.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *hia gesellas*, X, 17; *we bidas*, XI, 3; *gie geheras*, XIII, 14; *we stiges*, XX, 18; *heras hia*, XIII, 13; *nabbas we*, XIV, 17; *stondes ge*, XX, 6.

5. Subject unexpressed: *wæras ne wynnes*, VI, 27.

C. Vocalic endings.

Numerous curtailed forms occur in the preteritive presents, where -n, and not -ð, has been dropped. The curtailed ending is also carried over by analogy to *walla we* (< *wallan we*) VI, 31; *gie welle* (vultis; *R<sup>1</sup>, ge willað*), VII, 12; *gie wellæ* (vultis), XI, 14; *monig wælle g[e]cweada* (multi dicent; *R<sup>1</sup>, monige cwepað*), VII, 22. Other vocalic forms glossing Latin indicatives are *we gedrince* (bibemus; *R<sup>1</sup>, drincaþ wæ*), VI, 31; *ne oncnæu ge* (non intelligitis; *R<sup>1</sup>, ne ongetað ge*), XVI, 11; and *gie geheras and ne oncnæuge*

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Skeat, Cambridge, 1871-1887.

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(audietis et non intelligitis), XIII, 14, contrasted with *ne ononauas hia* (neque intelligunt) in the same context.

The intervention of two substantives between the verb and its subject causes the inflection -s to be extended to the first singular in *ec is monn amm under mæht hæfis*, VIII, 9.

#### *Mark.*

##### A. Endings in -ð.

1. Noun-subject: *bytto losað*, II, 22; *habbað halo*, II, 17; *cymeð ðonne dagas*, II, 20.

2. Adjective-subject: *alle sæcað*, I, 37; *alle onginnað*, XIII, 4.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða ðe herað*, IV, 20; *ða ðe . . . nabbað*, II, 17; X, 23; *ða ðe . . . forecymeð*, VII, 15.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *hia fæstað*, II, 18; *gie dæð*, VII, 9; *doað gie*, II, 24; *habbað gie*, VI, 38.

5. Subject unexpressed: *cwæðað*, I, 30; *cumað*, III, 19.

##### B. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *ðegnas ðine ne geongas*, VII, 5; *cwæðas . . . menn*, VIII, 27; *cwæðas ða wuðunto*, XII, 35.

2. Adjective or demonstrative pronoun-subject: *ða (illa) gewidle-gas*, VII, 20; *monigo . . . cymæs*, XIII, 6.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða ðe gewidlas*, VII, 15; *ða ðe cwæðas*, XII, 18; *ða ðe inn-gaas*, XII, 23.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *hia fæstas*, II, 20; *gie haldas*, VII, 8; *gie wutedlice cwæðas*, VII, 11; *forgefes gie*, VII, 12; *habbas hia*, VIII, 2.

5. Subject unexpressed: *selles*, X, 33.

##### C. Vocalic endings.

Exclusive of the preteritive presents and *wesan*, the following vocalic forms translate Latin plural indicatives: *wallige* (vultis; *R<sup>2</sup>*, *wallasge*), XV, 12; *we gelic-leta welle* (adsimilabimus), IV, 30; *gie onfæ* (accipietis), XI, 24; and *unbinde hia* (solvunt), XI, 4.

#### *Luke.*

##### A. Endings in -ð.

1. Noun-subject: *deado arisað*, VII, 22; *staras cymeð*, XII, 6; *wæras . . . arisað*, XI, 32; *cymað dagas*, XXI, 6; XXIII, 29; *cymeð dagas*, XVII, 22; XIX, 43.

2. Adjective-subject: *alle . . . onginnað*, XIV, 29; *bæge . . . fallað*, VI, 59; *gaað alle*, II, 3.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða ðe geherað*, VIII, 12; *ða ðe geseað*, X, 20; *ða ðe . . . læðað*, VI, 27; *ða ðe iuh wel dæð*, VI, 33.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *we habbað*, III, 8; *gie doað*, III, 13; *hia cymað*, XXI, 8; *we abideð*, VII, 19; *doað we*, III, 14; *wutað gie*, X, 11; *cunnað gie*, XII, 56.

5. Subject unexpressed: *hlinigað*, XIII, 29; *cymeð*, XIII, 29.

#### B. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *ða celmertmenn fadores mines monigfaldas*, XV, 17.

2. Adjective or demonstrative pronoun-subject: *ðas geworðes*, I, 20; *ðas geswigas*, XIX, 40; *menigo . . . sæcas*, XIII, 24.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ða ðe geseas*, XIV, 29; *ða ðe ingeongas*, XI, 33; *ða ðe . . . sittas*, I, 79.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *we abidas*, VII, 20; *gie gemætes*, II, 12; *hia cymes*, XI, 33; *ceiges gie*, VI, 46.

5. Subject unexpressed: *cwæðas*, XVII, 21; *geongas*, IV, 36.

#### C. Vocalic forms.

There are fewer curtailed endings in *Luke* than in any other gospel. Latin indicatives are glossed by vocalic forms in *nallo we* (*nolumus*), XIX, 14 and *gie wælle* (*vultis*), VI, 31.

#### *John.*

##### A. Endings in -ð.

1. Noun-subject: *ða deaðo geherað*, V, 25; *werca getrymeð*, V, 36; *streamas . . . flowað*, VII, 38.

2. Adjective-subject: *alle . . . geherað*, V, 28; *alle . . . cymmeð*, XI, 48.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ðaðe gelefað*, I, 12; *ðaðe neglefað*, VI, 64.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *gie geseað*, I, 51; *gie alle wun-driað*, VII, 21; *gie mec lufað*, XVI, 27; *gelefeð ge*, IV, 48; *ne habbað gie*, VI, 53.

##### B. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *ða scipo stefn his geheras*, X, 3.

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2. Adjective or possessive pronoun-subject : *alle cymmes*, III, 26 ; *alle gelefes*, XI, 48 ; *ongeattas alle*, XIII, 35 ; *ongeatas mec mino*, x, 14.

3. Relative pronoun-subject : *ðaðe geworðias*, IV, 23 ; *ðaðe . . . getrymes*, v, 39.

4. Personal pronoun-subject : *we gesprecas*, III, 11 ; *hia lifias*, v, 25 ; *gie . . . gedæmas*, VIII, 15 ; *onfoas gie*, III, 11 ; *ne habbas gie*, v, 38 ; *ne gelefes gie*, v, 38.

5. Subject unexpressed : *cwæðas*, VII, 26 ; *nabbas*, xv, 22.

C. Vocalic endings.

Vocalic forms are given for the following Latin indicatives : *nabbo we* (non habemus), XIX, 15 ; *wæ gegeonge* (ibimus), VI, 68 ; *ge nælle* (non vultis), x, 38 ; *we dæ* (facimus), XI, 47 ; *gie hæbbe* (habetis), XII, 36 ; and *wyrce we* (faciemus), XIV, 23.

Curtailed endings in the imperative plural are *nalle gie* (nolite), v, 45, and *nælle gie*, VII, 24.

From the categories given above for the various gospels it is seen that the use of the endings -ð or -s does not depend on the nature of the subject. On the other hand, the curtailed forms are used only when the subject is a personal pronoun and immediately precedes or follows the verb. But even when this last condition is observed, the curtailed endings in all the Early Northern texts are far outnumbered by the full forms in -ð or -s.

The inflectional -s of the Northern third singular and the indicative plural has been explained by Murray, Sweet, and Bülbring [quoted above] as due to the transition of ð to s. According to this view, such a transition occurs only in the case of final -ð of the unaccented endings -eð and -að. This explanation has the advantage of accounting for the origin of -s as an organic process of speech rather than as a result of analogy. Its weakness lies in the inability of its advocates to cite analogous processes outside of these verbal endings.

But there are other facts that tend to cast suspicion on the correctness of this view. The organic transition from ð to s would explain the plurals in -as but not those in -es, an inflection that occurs frequently in both the indicative and the imperative plural in the *Durham Ritual* and the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. In *Matthew*

alone there are seventy-six *es*-plurals in the indicative and twenty-five in the imperative, a total far too large to be explained as due to scribal errors.

With these *es*-plurals should be associated the plurals in *-eð* common to all the Early Northern texts. Since these texts were written at a period antedating the weakening of *a* to *e* in inflectional syllables, these plurals in *-eð* and *-es* were probably formed on the analogy of the *-eð* and *-es* of the third singular. It is worthy of note here that the inflection *-eð* in the singular is not restricted to the third person. In all the Early Northern texts, it is occasionally used as the inflection of the second singular.<sup>1</sup> Since this *-eð* is obviously borrowed from the third person, this fact could be interpreted as indicating a close organic relation between the pronunciation of *-ð* and that of *-s*. It moreover suggests that the *-es* of the third person singular could have been borrowed from the second singular, to which it originally belonged. The latter inference would be in harmony with the extension of *-s* to the first singular in *Matthew* VIII, 9. A parallel to this procedure is found in the Old Norse extension of *-r* from the second to the third person singular,<sup>2</sup> which may not have been without influence on the Old Northumbrian. In like manner the Old Northumbrian extension of *-s* to the plural is paralleled by the later Scandinavian use of *-r* in both singular and plural.<sup>3</sup> To whichever of these causes be assigned the preference, it is probable that both factors—the close organic relation between *-ð* and *-s* and the extension of the *-s* originating in the second person singular to the other persons of the singular and to the plural—were at work in causing the Northern verbal inflection in *-s* to assert itself to the exclusion of the *ð*-forms.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sievers, § 356, note 2; Lindelöf, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Noreen, *Altnordische Grammatik*, I, § 457, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> Lundell, Paul's *Grundriss*,<sup>2</sup> I, 1488 (quoted above, p. 22).

<sup>4</sup> Lindelöf (*Die südnorthumbriſche Mundart*, p. 129), while discussing such forms as *cymeð*, *cweðes* in the plural, remarks, 'Es handelt ſich hier ſicher nicht um eine ſchwächung des endungsvocals, bezw. eine übertragung der endung des ſing., ſondern, wie die formen *cymeð*, *cweðeð* u. ſ. w. beweisen, um die anwendung der ſingularform in pluraliſcher function.' But this explanation would not account for *geniomes* (rapiunt), *Lind. Matt.* XI, 12 and the frequent use of *cymað*, *cymas* as plurals. Transference of endings is clearly ſhown in *lioſeð* (vivet), *Lind. John* VI, 57 beſide the regular *lioſað* in the next verſe.



2. *The Middle Northern.*

The investigation of the later Northern dialect is greatly embarrassed by the non-preservation of any considerable texts that would reveal its development between the beginning of the eleventh and the close of the thirteenth century.<sup>1</sup> In the absence of such transitional texts, the successive changes in the inflection can be inferred only from a knowledge of the conditions that prevailed on each side of this period.

The earliest published Northern texts of the Middle English period are the *Cursor Mundi* and the *Surtees Psalter*. Ten Brink<sup>2</sup> and Brandl<sup>3</sup> regard the latter as the older of the two, but its use of Midland inflections detracts from its value as a text, representative of the Northern dialect. The *Cursor Mundi*, besides being practically contemporaneous<sup>4</sup> with the *Psalter*, is far more regular in its inflections.

*Cursor Mundi.* (c. 1300.)

The first five thousand lines of MS. Cotton Vespasian A. iii. have been selected.<sup>5</sup> According to H. Hupe, this manuscript is in the Durham dialect of the first half of the fourteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The few fragments of this period that are preserved to us contain too often Southern as well as Northern forms. This is the case with the Charter of Ranulph, Bishop of Durham (c. 1099), printed by Hickes (*Thesaurus*, I, 149), and more accurately by Murray, p. 22. Neither this charter nor the three short fragments by Godric (died 1170), published by Zupitza (*Engl. Studien*, XI, 401-432), contain any present plural indicatives. A Scotch song in derision of the English at the siege of Berwick, 1296 has been preserved in Fabyan's *Chronicles* (printed by Pynson, 1516 and reprinted by H. Ellis, London, 1811). In this song (p. 398) the imperative plural has the ending -s, but in the later song (p. 440) of 1323 the Southern inflection is used in the indicative plural *makyth*.

<sup>2</sup> *Geschichte der Engl. Litteratur*, Strassburg, 1899, I, 332.

<sup>3</sup> Brandl says (Paul's *Grundriss*<sup>1</sup>, II, 649): 'Das älteste Denkmal, abgesehen von einer Umschreibung der *Ancoren Riwe*, ist vielleicht eine *Psalterübersetzung*, bearbeitet nach der Vulgata in kurzen Reimparen, noch mit einigen mittelländischen Anklängen in der Sprache und mit einer Steifheit des Stils, wie sie bei einem literarisch ungepflegten Dialekt begreiflich ist.'

<sup>4</sup> The *New English Dictionary*, s. v. *erde* and *hield* respectively, places the date of the *Cursor Mundi* and of the *Psalter* before 1300.

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Morris, E. E. T. S., 57 and 59.

<sup>6</sup> On the *Fiktion* and the *Text* of the MSS. of the *Middle-English Poem Cursor Mundi* (E. E. T. S., 101, p. 103 and p. 125).

A. Endings in -ð : None.<sup>1</sup>

B. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject : *many thosand lesis*, 6 ; *clerkes sais*, 343 ; *thinges halds*, 582 ; *dedis . . . tas*, 43 ; *mightes . . . wons*, 570 ; *beistes . . . has*, 4211 ; *has beistes*, 4216 ; *coms god peres*, 37 ; *all watres sinkes* (: *mans womb . . . drinkes*), 535.

2. Adjective-subject : *pis four mas*, 1318.

3. Relative pronoun-subject : *pæm . . . pat rages*, 48 ; *airs pat cumes*, 2374 ; *alle pat wonnes*, 3706 ; *bestes . . . pat has*, 4219 ; *pynges pat þam likes best*, 26 ; *pat þar singes* (: *a wel springes*), 1031.

4. Personal pronoun-subject : *Als gee wil luue your awn hele*, *And geildes til your creatur*, 1985 ; *Sin we wit hus now broght has nan*, 3167 ; *gee gain me has*, 2062.

C. Uninflected forms.

1. Noun-subject : None.

2. Adjective-subject : None.

3. Relative pronoun-subject :—There are two instances of the uninflected verb used with a relative pronoun-subject : *ful il ha[yt] þai pat spending spend þat findes na fro[te] þar-of at end*, 257 and *þir chapmen þat haue Joseph boght Un-til Egiphte þai haue him broght*, 4239. In the first, the whole passage, when compared with the other manuscripts, becomes suspicious. In the second, *þat haue* was probably caused by *þai haue* in the next line.

4. Personal pronoun-subject.

(a) Pronoun + verb : *we find*, 294 ; *þei bring*, 1039 ; *yee haf*, 1949 ; *we ta*, 4790 ; *we ha*, 4912 ; *we prai*, 4837 ; *gee hald*, 2896 ; *gee her*, 2327 ; *we find* (: *strind*), 2143 ; (: *wynd*), 399 ; *þai fall* (: *bal*), 2880 ; *we . . . find* (: *angel kynd*), 361. As the examples in the last section show, the verb should assume the inflected form when at a distance from its subject, but the necessity of rime causes it to assume occasionally the uninflected form. In the *Cursor Mundi*, the verb has normally the uninflected form if only one word comes between it and its personal pronoun-subject : *Quen þai þe see*, 2407 ; *yee funden have*, 4801 ; *þai forth cum*, 3423. If two or more words intervene, the form in -s is usually required.

<sup>1</sup> Since these endings do not occur in Middle Northern, this category will not again be mentioned.

The scansion of the lines shows that *-e* in the present indicative plural does not have syllabic value: *Bot elles we come for mikel nede*, 4826; *als ge haue sene inogh and hard*, 92; *For þis resun þat gee haue hard*, 551; *Yee haue noght gain him bot enuy*, 4140. From these examples it is seen that *-e* is frequently written as a supporting vowel for certain consonants or to indicate the length of a preceding vowel, but this usage is by no means uniform. Compare *we ha*, 4912 and *yee haf*, 1949 with the forms just given.

(b) Verb + pronoun: *Of all þere liif spend þai þe stage*, 50; *To se þe saul haf ye na might*, 580; *duell þai*, 3073; *find yee*, 4956; *hald þai*, 2281; *ha þai*, 2849; *ha we*, 5093. Forms in *-e* occasionally occur but without syllabic value: *Wene yee þe king tresur at hyde?* 4902; *Ne haue we wit us trussed noght*, 4911. There is only one instance where, from the scansion of the line, the *-e* could count as a syllable: "*Childer*," he said, "*quat rede gee?*" 1874.

In the case of the substantive verb, *is* frequently occurs with a plural subject: *thre thinges þam is wit-jn*, 354; *Elleuen breþer es we liuand*, 4847. The modals are uninflected throughout.<sup>1</sup>

When used without a pronominal subject, the imperative plural ends in *-s*: *sittes*, 4975; *ne dos*, 2794; *gas*, 4803; otherwise the verb is uninflected: "*Rises up*," he said, "*and fle gee sone*," 2813; *hald gee*, 2667; *tak yee*, 2898; *yee tak* (: *sak*), 4799. The uninflected form is generally used when it is immediately followed by the pronoun-subject of another verb: *Lok þai alle be tain*, 4896. Quite irregular is the inflection of the second imperative in *Bot gas and fals yee him to fote*, 4733, where the other manuscripts have the dissyllabic forms *falles* or *falleþ* and omit *yee*.

#### *The Surtees Psalter.* (c. 1300.)

The best of the three manuscripts containing the *Surtees Psalter*, MS. Cotton, Vespasian D VII, has been edited by J. Stevenson for the Surtees Society<sup>2</sup> and more recently by C. Horstman,<sup>3</sup> who

<sup>1</sup> As this is the case throughout later Northern, the modals will not hereafter be mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> *The Publications of the Surtees Society*, 1843-1847.

<sup>3</sup> *Yorkshire Writers: Richard Rolle of Hampole and his Followers*, London, 1896, II, 129 ff.

gives all the variants of the other two manuscripts. According to Horstman,<sup>1</sup> MS. *Vespasian D* is not earlier than 1350, although the original version may have been written in the preceding century.

A study of the language of the *Psalter* has been made by H. Wende,<sup>2</sup> who however fails to record the *n*-forms of the present indicative plural in *Vespasian D*, the most distinctively Northern of all the manuscripts. The first fifty Psalms in the edition of Stevenson, collated with that of Horstman, form the basis of the present investigation.

A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *eghen lokes*, x, 5; *hevens telles*, xviii, 2.
2. Adjective-subject: *fele sais*, iii, 3; *many . . . sais*, iv, 6.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *Ye ere lered þat demes lande*, ii, 10; *þai þat droves*, iii, 2; *al þat wirkes*, v, 7; vi, 9; xiii, 4; *al þat him sekes*, xxi, 27; *þat . . . forthbringes* (: *þinges*), viii, 8.
4. Personal pronoun-subject: None.

B. Uninflected forms.

1. Noun-subject: None.
2. Demonstrative pronoun-subject: *þa hate*, xxiv, 19. Here the Harleian MS. reads *þai hate*, in which the form of the verb is regular.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *alle þat hope*, v, 12; *þat love*, v, 12; *Folke þine þat leve in þe*, xxvii, 9; *þai þat seke*, xxxix, 15; *whilk love*, xxxix, 17; *þat traist* (Horstman, *traiste*), xlviii, 7. Such a large number of indicative plurals in *-e* with a relative pronoun-subject suggests strong Midland influence. The scribe that was responsible for the Midland forms given in the next section could easily have altered these endings from *-es* to *-e*.

<sup>1</sup> Horstman says (pp. 129-130): 'Stevenson places MS. *Vesp.* in the middle of Edward I's reign; this is a mistake, the MS. is not earlier than 1350, and the two other MSS. are still later. Nevertheless, language and style, and the comparative rarity of French terms, give the impression of antiquity. All the MSS. are Yorkshire: MS. *Vesp.* seems to belong to the neighbourhood of R. Rolle. . . R. Rolle died in 1349 an old man, and his early life belongs to the 13th century. The metrical *Psalter* might well be a work of his youth, his first attempt. The question is one of difficulty, and I cannot now attempt to solve it.'

<sup>2</sup> *Ueberlieferung und Sprache der mittelhochdeutschen Version des Psalters und ihr Verhältnis zur lateinischen Vorlage*, Breslau, 1884.

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However, one can not hold the scribe accountable for *Wordes of his mouthe pat ga (: als swa)*, xxxv, 4.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *pai knawe*, xiii, 4; *pai wane*, xxxvi, 20; *we here* xlvi, 9; *we calle (: of alle)*, xvii, 32; *pai sai (: night and dai)*, xxxix, 17; *whi love yhe*, iv, 3; *hou sai ye*, x, 2; *mikil we*, x, 5; *se we*, xlvi, 9.

### C. Endings in -n.

The following Midland forms are found in the present indicative plural: *pat . . . sayne*, iv, 5; *pat forthgone* (perambulant), viii, 9; *pat wilen*, xxxix, 15; *pai sain*, xli, 11; and *alle pat erden*, xlvi, 2.

In the case of the substantive verb, *be(n)* is frequently used in the present indicative: *pai be (: me)*, xvii, 37; xxxvii, 20; *pat . . . be (: þe)*, xxxix, 17; *pai . . . bene (: bi-dene)*, xxxvi, 20; whereas in the *Cursor Mundi*, *be(n)*, if used in the indicative, is restricted to the future tense. There is one instance of *is* used as a plural: *And ivels in paire hertes isse (: to neghburgh hisse)*, xxvii, 3.

The unconditional imperative plural usually assumes the inflection -s: *serves* ii, 11; *Comes and sees*, xlv, 9; *Bihaldes and sees*, xlv, 11; but occasionally for the sake of rime it may be uninflected: *understande (: lande)*, ii, 10. When the pronominal subject is expressed, the uninflected form is employed: *Singestiloure God, singe yhe*, xlvi, 7; *Comes, sones, me yhe here (: sal lere)*, xxxiii, 12.

### Richard Rolle's *Pricke of Conscience*.<sup>1</sup> (a. 1349.)

#### A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *werkes for-worthes*, 780; *eres waxes*, 782; *herbes . . . bringes*, 648; *clerkes . . . bers*, 730; *eghen rynnes (: he bygynnes)*, 781; *tethe rotes (: he dotes)*, 785; *spirytes . . . duelles (of angels)*, 977; *clerkes caldes (: þe les)*, 1046; *many men . . . fraistes (: he pat traystes)*, 1090; *clerkes understandes (: twa handes)*, 1257; *acordes þe wordes*, 1302; *commes gudes*, 1350; *chaunges þe tymes*, 1432; *says clerkes*, 2350; *fallas . . . dayes*, 758.

2. Adjective or demonstrative pronoun-subject: *many has*, 183; *per four lettes*, 253; *twa . . . lufes*, 1844; *pas . . . serves*, 1081;

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Morris, *The Philological Society's Early English Volume*, 1862-4. The first two thousand five hundred lines have been selected.

*alle þir . . . falles*, 800; *some . . . kepes* (: *worshepes*), 1138; *dredes ful many*, 1766.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *þam þat understands and knowes*, 203; *many þat trowes . . . bot groches*, 303; *þat standes* (: *handes*), 681; (: *landes*), 1000; *men þat þar-in dwelles* (: *elles*), 1073; *storms þat blawes* (: *wawes*), 1217; *þa þat . . . greves* (: *myscheves*), 1564; *þa þat duels* (: *angels*), 2337.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *Bot þai folow, ay, þair awen wille And of noght elles thynkes, ne tas hede*, 274-5; *þai trow . . . but groches*, 296; *þai have . . . bot forgettes*, 2050.

#### B. Uninflected forms.

1. Noun-subject:—In the first twenty-five hundred lines there are two uninflected plural indicatives with a noun-subject: *many men se*, 1532 and *clerkes prove* (: *to lufe*), 1087.

2. Adjective-subject: None.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: The single occurrence of the uninflected plural with a relative pronoun, *þat hald pases*, 1239, is probably due to an error in writing *þat* instead of *þai*. It is noteworthy that at this place three consecutive lines begin with the relative *þat*.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *þai know*, 277; *þai trow*, 296; *þai do*, 1029; *we lif*, 1256; *we wax*, 1298 and 2106; *yhe here*, 1303; *we duelle*, 1377; *we fande*, 1463; *þai life*, 1628; *þai gang* (: *wrang*), 193; *þai se* (: *may be*), 297; *we se* (: *vanité*), 1178 and 1516; *we tyn* (: *pyn*), 1457; *we fail* (: *travail*), 1463; *þai bere* (: *feblere*), 1502; *þai chese* (: *vanytese*), 1583. Unusually distant from the subject are the uninflected forms in *When þai þis tretisce here or rede*, 343.

The cases in which the pronoun-subject follows the verb are not numerous. They likewise unite in presenting the uninflected form of the verb, the final *-e* being without syllabic value. Compare *haf we*, 1372, 1456, 1459; *se we*, 1444; and *wyn we*, 2112 with *fynde we*, 1368 and *lofe we*, 1470.

There are two instances of *is* with a plural subject: *maners þat in the world es* (: *unstabilnes*), 1657, and *þat . . . es* (: *wrechednes*), 1169. In this connection it may be noted that *was* is used with a plural subject in *als alle my faders was* (: *sal pas*), 1386.

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Richard Rolle's *Prose Treatises*.<sup>1</sup> (a. 1349.)

##### A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *angells gernys*, 4, 2; *astronomyenes by-haldes*, 9, 24; *ypocrittes takes*, 10, 18; *bedells and foresters duse*, 11, 20; *thynges makes*, 13, 10 and 20; *takes false crystyn mene*, 10, 13; *sprynges errorrs*, 17, 31.

2. Relative pronoun-subject: *þay þat drynkes*, 3, 31; *þay þat files* 4, 18; *men þat lufes*, 8, 7; *deuells þat efforces*, 8, 18; *þat . . . delyttes*, 9, 5.

3. Personal pronoun-subject: *þay flye . . . and rystes*, 9, 2; *þay hafe . . . and fastes and wakes and semes*, 9, 12; *we ere disposed and hase*, 35, 13; *þay fall sumtyme and brekes*, 39, 19.

##### B. Uninflected forms:

*þay fynd*, 4, 25; *þay say*, 9, 26; *we honour*, 10, 17; *þay come and gaa*, 9, 7; *þay saye*, 9, 25; *we calle*, 1, 9; *ge trauelle*, 4, 16; *þay halde*, 8, 11.

Similar to *ic . . . hæfis*, *Lindisfarne Matthew*, VIII, 9 is *when I here thaym or redis þam*, 43, 19; but in this case a personal pronoun, and not a noun, intervenes to cause the assumption of the inflected form.

*North English Legends*.<sup>2</sup> (1300–1350.)

##### A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *palmers walkes*, I, 427; *al men says*, VII, 228; *wurdes proves*, X, 84; *answers turmentes*, X, 168; *clerkis has told*, XIV, 145; *all þe pople . . . loues*, II, 194; *oure foure bodis lies* (: *wise*), VI, 320; *men and wemen standes* (: *seruandes*), VII, 200; *lessons unto us lers* (: *maners*) II, 18.

2. Indefinite adjective-subject: *sum sais*, VI, 173; XIII, 173 and 174.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *deuils þat ledis*, I, 34; *þam þat kepis*, I, 362; *who kepis*, III, 131; *al þo þat passes*, VI, 18, *þaynges þat . . . has bene*, XIV, 176; *Maysters þat . . . mase* (: *rase*, pret. pl.), VI, 74; *al men þat . . . hase* (: *place*), VII, 280.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. G. Perry, E. E. T. S., 20.

<sup>2</sup> C. Horstmann, *Allenglische Legenden: I, Die Nordenglische Legendensammlung*, Heilbronn, 1881. The first fourteen legends have been selected.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *How ge er blith, and euir has bene*, I, 361; *pai hald noght fre bot castes*, VII, 280.

5. Noun and personal pronoun used conjointly as subject: *Saynt Steuen and I ligges euyn mete*, VI, 275.

#### B. Uninflected forms.

1. Personal pronoun-subject.—(a) Pronoun + verb: *ge call*, II, 155; *pai wirk*, VI, 186; *ge get*, VII, 168; *pai ask*, XIV, 165; *ge byfore haf*, VII, 233; *pai say (: night and day)*, I, 197; *pai dwell (: fell)*, III, 27; *we ken (: men)*, VII, 165; *ge stand (: land)*, VII, 231; *pai tell (: fell)*, X, 255; *ge on call (: ouer-all)*, I, 39; *ge now se (: degre)*, I, 329.

There are numerous cases of silent final *-e* used to indicate the length of a preceding vowel or to support certain consonants: *þe gudes þat ge haue tane with trayne*, II, 452; *When pai here me neuin Cristes name*, X, 100; *Unto pai come to þat cuntre*, IV, 32; *we rede (: gun lede)*, I, 279; *pai rede (: takes hede)*, III, 20; *ge forsake (: take)*, VII, 152; *we þus writen finde (: in mynde)*, II, 90.

(b) Verb + pronoun: *find we*, II, 7; *say pai*, VII, 91; *do ge*, VII, 141; *haf pai*, VII, 230; *haue pai*, VII, 218 and 525; *loue pai*, VII, 353.

2. Noun-subject:—There are four instances of the uninflected verb used with a noun-subject, a number larger than is usually found in other Northern texts of the same length. They are *als sum laude men haue said biforn*, VI, 6; *yourè hetinges waste*, X, 38; *als clerkes knawe (: laue)*, V, 3; and *als clerkes rede (: wikked dede)*, VI, 171.

The imperative plural has the *s*-form when the subject-pronoun is not expressed: *Festes him . . . Bot bindes him*, I, 113; *Wendis ogayn . . . And lettes me noght*, I, 137; *Gose, ledes hir*, I, 309; otherwise the uninflected form is normally employed: *Haue ge no thoght*, III, 125; *no lenger ge stand (: land)*, VII, 231. The uninflected form may also be used if a reflexive pronoun-object comes immediately after the verb: “*Goes to the wod and get gow wandes And bring þam home bunden in bandes! And gose to grauell biside þe se And many stones bringes unto me!*” VII, 213–216. The plural form is occasionally used when only one person is addressed: “*Damysell, þat can ge best do. Says, what ge will to him in hy!*”



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I, 432, and *Saynt Lucy said*: "*Moder, takes hede And trewly trous  
pis þat þai rede,*" III, 19-20.

*Ywain and Gawain*.<sup>1</sup> (1300-1350.)

A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *wordes greves*, 508; *maidens . . . has*, 3349; *His men . . . has . . . and findes*, 1655.

2. Relative pronoun-subject: *þam þat herkyns*, 4; *þam þat sais*, 968; *maidens þat wirkes*, 2992; *knyghtes þat langes*, 3471; *we þat here suffers*, 3044.

3. Personal pronoun-subject: *Whils ge it have and thinkes on me*, 1530 and 1538.

B. Uninflected forms.

(a) Personal pronoun + verb: *we wirk*, 305; *we hald*, 1246; *we luf*, 2252; *ge luf*, 1505; *ge ask*, 1526; *ge mak*, 2245; *ge ga*, 3007; *ge gif*, 3293; *þai cum*, 311; *þai say*, 1264; *þai dwell* (: *omell*), 1435; *ge knaw* (: *thraw*), 2362; *ge understand* (: *land*), 2665. Supporting final -e is frequently written: *þarefore þai hate me to þe ded*, 2162; *Oft þai bete us wonder sare*, 3060; *ge mende* (: *ende*), 1513 and 2363; *þai him here* (: *manere*), 302.

(b) Verb + personal pronoun: *cum þai*, 303; *hald ge*, 1232; *bical þai*, 2157; *seke þai*, 769; *have ge*, 1055.

Because of the requirement of rime, the verb assumes the uninflected form with a noun-subject in *þe fendes lyf* (: *gyf*), 3040. The uninflected plural also occurs once with a pronoun and a noun used conjointly as subject: *He and his munge ha thoght*, 1215. There are two instances of *is* used with a plural subject: *hyr willes es* (: *maystres*), 935 and *es noght swilk twa*, 3590.

The unconditioned imperative plural normally requires the ending -es: *understandes* (: *tithandes*), 139; (: *landes*), 1519; *Takes þe beste and bindes him fast*, 3178. The uninflected form is used not only when the pronominal subject is in close contact with the verb but also when it is unexpressed, if the reflexive object is used as an exponent of the verb-form: *Avise gow wele*, 1511. The uninflected plural may also be used if the form of the verb is made manifest by a following pronoun used as the subject of a dependent verb:

<sup>1</sup> Ed. G. Schleich, Oppeln und Leipzig, 1887.

*Luke ge cum*, 1514. The frequent use of the *s*-form when only one person is addressed may sometimes be explained as the employment of the *pluralis majestatis*, as *Takes*, 88 and *Cumandes*, 123 (both when Kay is addressing the Queen) and *Lates him*, 507 (in Ywain's address to the Queen). But the occurrence of inflected and uninflected forms in the same speech—*lat be*, 942 and *takes tent*, 951; *dwells*, 2361 and *socore*, 2363; *Gifes dome and lates us wend*, 3428 and *Gifes gowre dome and lat us ga*, 3442—are to be brought into connection with the interchange of *pou* and *ge* (*gow*: *now*, 3294; *pe*: *fre*, 3299), which is not always rational.<sup>1</sup>

Lawrence Minot's *Poems*.<sup>2</sup> (c. 1342.)

A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *goure harmes cumes*, VI, 43; *pe wordes of sir Edward makes*, V, 3; *pe Franche men er . . . And mase*, VIII, 34.
2. Adjective-subject: *sum ligges*, III, 99; *sais all*, V, 88.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *deds pat dose me dere*, I, 10.

B. Uninflected forms.

1. Personal pronoun-subject: *pai sail*, X, 4; *we knaw* (: *law*), VII, 125; *we bigin*, (: *gyn*), VII, 152; *als we vele ken* (: *Amen*), V, 87; *For pai haue failed of paire pray*, I, 38; *pai fede*, X, 5; *cri pai*, I, 69; *find ge*, VI, 19; *get ge*, VIII, 3; *think pai*, VIII, 36; *haue pai*, I, 51; *leue ge*, VI, 22.

2. Noun-subject:—There are two instances of the uninflected plural with a noun subject: *pir galaymen haue wroght*, III, 20, and *kinges . . . call* (: *in pall*), VII, 112.

The only occurrence of the inflection *-en* is in *Whare pi felaws lien and gapin* (: *with pi wapin*), VII, 135.

*The Lay Folks' Catechism*.<sup>3</sup> (c. 1350.)

A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *hali saules has*, 19; *clerkes techis and shewes*, 79; *spices springes and spredes*, 473; *dedis . . . shewes*, 36; *fallas four thinges*, 282; *comes . . . spices*, 466.

<sup>1</sup> See Schleich's remark on l. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. W. Scholle, *Quellen und Forschungen*, LII.

<sup>3</sup> Ed. Simmons and Nolloth, *E. E. T. S.*, 118.

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2. Adjective-subject: *twa lies*, 274; *thre first teches*, 383; *al othir comes*, 453; *thre . . . clenses*, 315.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *al creatures that loues*, 30; *all that haves*, 60; *tham that . . . tas*, 337.

4. Personal pronoun-subject; *Als we sklaundir or backbite or falsly defames, Or fandres*, 210; *we gete, or tas*, 244; *we will noght do . . . Bot anely haldes*, 521.

B. Uninflected forms:

*we sla*, 209; *we do*, 261; *we think*, 267; *we haf*, 312 and 313; *we have*, 311; *we bere*, 23; *thai come*, 68; *we loue*, 265; *thai gastely sla*, 455.

There is one instance of *is* with a plural subject: *And in this commandement is forboden us Alkyns mysbileues*, 175.

*The York Plays.*<sup>1</sup> (c. 1430–1440.)<sup>2</sup>

A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *wordis makis . . . and chaunges*, x, 275; *myses bytis*, xi, 274; *beestis lyes*, xi, 295; *all pepul prayes* (: *all weyes*), x, 182; *comes . . . cares*, ix, 9.

2. Relative pronoun-subject: *þo þat lykys*, ii, 11; *vertues þat longes*, v, 48; *we that haues*, v, 164; *Jewes þat wonnes*, xi, 31 and 161; *loppis that . . . makis*, xi, 294.

3. Personal pronoun-subject: *ge wax . . . and growes*, ii, 84; *we . . . hase*, x, 357. The irregular *you eates*, iv, 57 is probably an error for *þou eates*; compare *Thowe speydes* in the next line. Likewise abnormal is the ending *-s* in *Why crys you swa?* xi, 257, which has a parallel in the imperative *Takis ge entent*, ix, 46.

B. Uninflected forms.

(a) Personal pronoun + verb: *ghe ly*, i, 115 and 118; *þai assent*, ii, 5; *we neyd*, iv, 39; *ye speyd*, iv, 89; *we on call* (: *shall*), iv, 49; *ye ga* (: *fra, twa, wa*), vi, 19; *ye go* (: *wo*), vi, 55; (: *my to*), vii, 81; *we pray* (: *þat maye*), ix, 164; *we kenn* (: *ten, Jessen, men*),

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, Oxford, 1885. Twelve plays have been chosen for study.

<sup>2</sup> Although the plays were probably composed about 1340–1350, the manuscript dates approximately from 1430–1440.—Miss Smith's Introduction, p. xviii and p. xlv.

*xi*, 49; *they ken* (: *Jessen*), *xi*, 323; *pei in dwell* (: *Israell*), *xi*, 186; *we wele warrand* (: *fande*, third pret. sg.), *xi*, 221.

Silent *-e* is frequently written as a supporting vowel, even though it may be altogether unnecessary: *And sen pai wrange haue wroght*, *ii*, 7; *We love the, mooste of myght*, *iv*, 48; *Looke that ye doe as ye haue sayd*, *iv*, 80; *we wirke*, *ix*, 300; *pei mene*, *x*, 121; *we come*, *x*, 150; *we banne*, *xi*, 257; *pay fele*, *xi*, 275; *we graunte*, *xi*, 353; *ge sitte* (: *gitt*), *ix*, 184; *we wende* (: *is sende*), *vi*, 168; *we warande* (: *fande*, *lande*, *thowsande*), *xi*, 54.

(b) Verb + personal pronoun: *why eat ye noght?* *v*, 29; *How do thay?* *xi*, 321; *fare we*, *iv*, 64; *gette wee*, *x*, 166; *sitte they*, *xi*, 325.

There is one instance of the irregular use of the uninflected verb with a noun-subject: *leues last*, *xi*, 102; and also one case of *-en* in the indicative plural: *Jewes . . . faren*, *xi*, 303. The uninflected form in *all that me wyrshippe sall wone here*, *i*, 137 is an error probably due to the dropping of *-s* before the initial *-s* of *sall*.

The extension of *-s* to the first singular occurs when the verb is at a distance from its subject, as in *I with my worde hase wrothe*, *ii*, 80. Through analogy with the *s*-plurals, *is* as well as *ar* may be used with a plural subject: *In erthe is trees*, *iii*, 9; *all thynges is mayd*, *iv*, 60; *dayntys that is*, *iv*, 97.

The imperative plural has, as a rule, the ending *-s* when the subject-pronoun is not in immediate contact with the verb: *helpes*, *xi*, 81; *Beeths*, *xi*, 197; *comes forth ge two*, *iii*, 94; *Wendes and spers youre dores*, *ix*, 161; *Lovis me for-thy and loues me aye*, *iii*, 36; *Beis . . . comes . . . Haves*, *xi*, 367. The uninflected plural which, with the exception of *Takis ge*, *ix*, 46, is everywhere used when the subject-pronoun is postpositive—*Goo yhe*, *v*, 173; *wytt ye*, *vi*, 15; *bide ge*, *x*, 145—has been extended to cases where this is replaced by the reflexive object-pronoun: *mayke you*, *iv*, 55; *holde you*, *ii*, 29. The uninflected form is likewise frequently used when the imperative is followed by the pronominal subject of a dependent verb: *Looke that ye bothe saue and sett*, *iv*, 24; *Looke that ye do*, *iv*, 80; *Dwell here yf that ye canne*, *iv*, 29. From instances like the last it was but a step to the use of the uninflected plural dissociated from the idea of a pronominal subject or object expressed in the same clause. Thus we have *kepe*, *iv*, 91 and *x*,

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149; *Love . . . harken . . . do*, IV, 50; and *Alle creatures to me take tent*, VI, 1. However, the number of uninflected plurals in such cases as these is, in the *York Plays*, far exceeded by the full inflections in -s.

*The Towneley Plays.*<sup>1</sup> (1350-1450.)<sup>2</sup>

A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *tythyngys mekyll amendys*, IX, 149; *men . . . blowys* (: *lawes*), IX, 94.
2. Adjective-subject: *all trowes*, VII, 10; *all bowys*, IX, 20.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *ye all that standys*, I, 157; *all that beris*, III, 105; *showers that renys*, III, 351; *that lofys*, VI, 142.

B. Uninflected forms.

(a) Personal pronoun + verb: *we call*, I, 25; *ye wax*, I, 191; *we thank*, I, 208; *thay increas*, VIII, 53; *thai leyf*, VIII, 350; *ye luf*, IX, 133; *thay ryn* (: *in*), III, 357; *we trus* (: *us*), VII, 152; *we ken* (: *ten, men*), VIII, 53; *thay dwell* (: *emell*), VIII, 199; *ye . . . ken* (: *men*), II, 16; *we . . . call* (: *I shall*), IV, 2; *ye . . . gang* (: *lang*), XI, 11.

Silent final -e is frequently written: *We lofe the, lord, with all oure thoght*, I, 75; *here ar well moo then we have seen*, I, 237; *thay multiplye*, VIII, 37; *we fare*, VIII, 305; *we drowne* (: *bowne, downe*), VIII, 414.

(b) Verb + personal pronoun: *get we*, II, 82; *Why cry ye so?* VIII, 270; *how do thay*, VIII, 333; *have we*, I, 151; *how fayre ye?* III, 190.

Strongly suggestive of Midland influence is the large number of uninflected plurals used with a noun or relative pronoun: *elders haue*, II, 101; *prayers haue*, IV, 66; *mystis . . . byte*, VIII, 287; *folk haue*, VIII, 313; *Jues . . . fayre*, VIII, 315; *floures that smell*, I, 239; *all that wyrk*, II, 70; *that make*, VIII, 34; *Jues that won*, VIII, 35; *that kepe*, VIII, 62; *we that . . . haue*, I, 251. The Midland -en occurs once: *whils that ye liffen* (: *has giffen*), II, 447,

<sup>1</sup> Ed. G. England, E. E. T. S., Extra Series, LXXI. Eleven plays have been selected.

<sup>2</sup> Ten Brink (II, 266) assigns the manuscript to the beginning of the fifteenth century.

as does also the ending *-th*: *thise tythyngys doth*, IX, 168. There is one case of *-th* in the first singular: *I . . . hath*, X, 2, and one instance of *is* used with a plural subject: *Greate mystis, sir, ther is*, VIII, 286.

Also in the inflection of the imperative plural a divergence from the usage of the *York Plays* is noticed. In the *York Plays* the unconditioned plural normally assumes the ending *-s*, but in the *Towneley Plays* the uninflected forms are almost exclusively used: *herkyn*, VII, 2 and 91; *browke*, II, 447; *hold*, VI, 131; *heyyf*, VIII, 412; *blyn* (: *wyll you wyn*), VIII, 210,—twenty-three in all. The *s*-plural is used only twice: *herkyns*, I, 260 and VII, 31.

Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil*.<sup>1</sup> (c. 1420.)

A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *ryvarys ragys*, I, 963; *steddys growys*, I, 1344; *hyrdys hydys*, I, 1350; *pylgrymys mais*, II, 1672; *yheris hapnys*, III, 662; *mudrys . . . berys*, I, 702; *landys lyis* (: *Tessalyis*), II, 1234; (: *Paradys*), I, 544; *autoris . . . sayis* (: *wayis*), II, 842; *cymmys fludis*, I, 129; *lyis the landys*, I, 1067.

2. Indefinite adjective- or demonstrative pronoun-subject: *syndry haldys*, I, 309; *sum oysis*, I, 1091; *thir lyis*, I, 1198.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *us that lywys*, I, 708; *watterys that cummys*, I, 924; *quha passys*, I, 946; *quha sekys*, I, 1006; *Thai that hafyn thaire matere, Or felys*, II, 612.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *we . . . reknys*, I, 300; *thai . . . has*, I, 817; *thai . . . sayis*, II, 800. The inflected form when the verb is in direct contact with the subject occurs twice: *thai oysis*, I, 665, and *thai spekys*, II, 857. The irregularity of this usage is shown by the normal *thai oys*, I, 661, 1167, 1265, II, 797; *we oys*, I, 1217, 1328, 1682, 1714, II, 768; and *we ws*, II, 765.

B. Uninflected forms.

(a) Pronoun + verb: *we fynd*, I, 55; *thai tak*, I, 154; *we call*, I, 388; *thai ly*, I, 1192; *yhe ga*, II, 866; *thai say* (: *day*), II, 373; *thai bere and get* (: *but let*), I, 652; *thai ly* (: *lychtly*), I, 1411; *we ta*

<sup>1</sup> Ed. David Laing, *The Historians of Scotland*, vols. II, III, IX, Edinburgh, 1872-79. The first three books form the basis of the present investigation.

(: *alsua*), VII, 523. Silent *-e* is frequently written, usually to indicate the length of the preceding vowel: *yhe here*, I, 782; *we halde*, I, 1404; *we fynde*, I, 1736; *thai halde and hawe* (: *gawe*, preterit singular), I, 88; *yhe crepe* (: *kepe*), III, 876.

(b) Verb + pronoun: *hawe yhe*, I, 1103; *calle we*, I, 1246; *mak thai*, II, 1157.

The unconditional imperative plural requires, as a rule, the form in *-s*, but uninflected forms are also occasionally found.

Gilbert of the Haye's *The Buke of the Law of Armys, or Buke of Bataillis*.<sup>1</sup> (1456.)

#### A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *treis has*, 9, 14; *clerkis callis*, 12, 36; *seven angelis betakenis*, 15, 11; *wateris gerris*, 20, 24; *hony beis cummys . . . and takis*, 20, 18; *departis all othir wateris*, 12, 24.

2. Relative pronoun-subject: *the quhilkis tynis*, 16, 27; *that pertenis*, 33, 14; *quhilkis traistis . . . bot has . . . bot lyvis*, 16, 26; *that . . . has*, 7, 10; *namys that eftir cummys*, 16, 9.

B. Uninflected forms:—*we see*, 5, 3; *thai understand*, 9, 1; *thai syn*, 16, 30; *thai do*, 30, 33; *thai touch*, 33, 27; *ge have*, 13, 28; *thai ressave*, 30, 9.

There are numerous instances of *is* used as a plural. In the majority of cases the subject follows the verb, the tendency being to use *ar* when the subject precedes. This distinction is illustrated by *is understandin the symple peple that ar*, 30, 22. Both nouns and relative pronouns may be used as the subject of *is*: *thre maneris . . . is*, 25, 30; *the weris that is*, 7, 7.

A similar tendency is observable in the case of the expletive use of *was* with a plural subject, which has also been extended to cases where the subject precedes: *Apostolis was* 8, 17; *thame that was*, 7, 15.

There are two instances of the apparent extension of the inflection *-s* to the infinitive: *And as to the see agayne passis all wateris, sa dois all sciencis in this world redoundis agayne to haly scripture*, 12, 24; *And ryght sa dois the fals opyniouns of herisy makis the*

<sup>1</sup> Ed. J. H. Stevenson, S. T. S., 1901. The First Part has been chosen for study.

*haly scripture sa bitter*, 20, 20. Since these are the only cases of this kind and both occur with *dois*, it is probable that *redoundis* and *makis* were felt as finite verbs and not as infinitives. In these two parallel constructions, *dois* is not to be regarded as an emphatic auxiliary but, in connection with the adverb of manner *sa*, is to be considered as anticipatory of the action of the real verb.

Barbour's *Bruce*.<sup>1</sup> (c. 1375; MS. 1487.)

A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *Ynglis men has*, IV, 648; *all men fleis*, IX, 90; *His fayis hym haldis*, VII, 251; *fleuris thair wais tais* (: *can chas*), VI, 436.

2. Relative pronoun-subject: *thingis that makis*, IV, 533; *thame that haldis*, IV, 726; *us that ydill lysis*, IV, 345; *that . . . haldis*, IV, 349.

3. Personal pronoun-subject: *thai to mankind has*, IV, 225; *thai . . . has*, IV, 365; VI, 550; VII, 313; VIII, 478; *thai . . . haldis*, IV, 541; *thai . . . makis*, IV, 691. Unusual is the form *has* in contact with the verb: *And quhen at thai has seyn the kyng*, VII, 283.

B. Uninflected forms.

(a) Personal pronoun + verb: *thai mak*, IV, 235 and 528; *ghe speir*, IV, 494; *ge knaw*, IV, 520; *we haf*, IV, 532; VI, 541; VII, 45; *thai ly*, V, 81; VII, 314; *we cum*, VIII, 248; *ge chasty me*, IX, 742; *ge now haf*, IV, 652; *thai occupy* (: *mercy*), IV, 524; *thai tell* (: *fell*), VII, 56; *thai ly* (: *halely*), VII, 539; *thai hyde*, IV, 375; *thai haue*, VII, 265; *we drede*, VII, 444.

(b) Verb + personal pronoun: *call thai*, IV, 205; *sa ghe*, VII, 258; *throw ge*, IX, 82; *think ge*, IX, 228; *haf pai*, IX, 717.

The imperative plural usually requires the inflected form when the pronominal subject is not in close contact with the verb: *hangis and drawis*! IV, 322; *haldis*, VII, 123; *thinkis*, VIII, 253; but *abide ghe heir*, VII, 10. The uninflected form may furthermore be

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Skeat, S. T. S., 1893-1895. The best manuscript is the one in St. John's College, Cambridge, which begins at line 57 of Book IV.—Skeat's Preface, p. lxi. I have selected a passage running from Book IV, line 57 to Book IX inclusive.



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used with a postpositive reflexive object: *mak gow gair*, IV, 626, and has also extended itself to many plurals the subjects of which are remote or unexpressed: *Bot haf ghe hardyment, cum ner . . . Wyn me*, VII, 439.

In the part of the *Bruce* quoted in Wyntoun's *Cronykil* (printed by Skeat, p. xciii ff.), only the following present indicative plurals occur: *Wys men sayis*, 210; *That . . . afferis*, 2678; *Thai sla . . . And haldis*, 2775; *ye haue*, 2782.

### Robert Henryson's *Poems*.<sup>1</sup> (c. 1475–1500.)

The poems selected are *Orpheus and Eurydice* (O), *The Lyoun and the Mous* (L), *Robene and Makyne* (R), and *The Bludy Serk* (S).

#### A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *deidis fallis*, O, 513; *scheip gois*, R, 30; *men cumis*, S, 78.
2. Adjective-subject: *thir thre turnis*, O, 483; *mony fallis*, 609.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *thame Quhilk . . . havis*, L, 181.

#### B. Uninflected forms:—

*we flee*, O, 438; *we cast*, 453; *we call*, 462; *thai incur*, 548; *we tak* (: *wrak*), 458; *we rede*, 477; *ye knaw*, L, 71; *ye haif*, 165; *thay se*, 184; *thay dreid*, 185; *haif ye*, 80.

The imperative plural is uninflected whether the pronominal subject is expressed or not: *Cum help, cum help*, L, 147; *Go, louse him sone*, 154; *Tak ye . . . And hing*, S, 76; *Think*, 120.

Intrusion of -s into the first singular is seen in *Now am I tane . . . and traistis*, L, 20 and *I knaw, Bot keipis*, R, 11.

### Dunbar's *The Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo*.<sup>2</sup> (a. 1503.)

#### A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *Birdis hes*, 60; *women has and . . . convoyis*, 453; *frendis . . . behaldis*, 436; *glowis my chaftis*, 108; *wateris myn ene, and welteris doune teris*, 439; *dois thir damysellis*, 457.
2. Indefinite adjective-subject: *Sum rownis; and sum ralgeis; and sum redis ballatis*, 480.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. David Laing, Edinburgh, 1865.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. John Small, *The Poems of William Dunbar*, S. T. S., 1884–93.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *hairteis that stryveis*, 59; *that sittis*, 440; *that . . . ioyis . . . and fangis . . . and lattis*, 62; *that . . . haldis . . . et delis*, 458.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *ge gour fayth hes*, 45.

**B. Uninflected forms.**

(a) Personal pronoun + verb: *ge call*, 50; *ge speir*, 52; *thai pleis*, 63; *thai lak*, 67; *ge speik*, 205; *we set*, 449; *we dule*, 450; *ge so blist call*, 235.

(b) Verb + personal pronoun: *think ge*, 47; *haif ge*, 153; *sleep ge*, 221; *say thai*, 440; *se ge*, 440.

Throughout this poem the imperative plural is uninflected both when the subject-pronoun is used: *ge lyth and leir*, 257, and when it is omitted: *be constant . . . and counterfeit*, 259; *Ladyis, leir thir lessonis et be*, 503.

Most of the narrative is in the first person, and as a consequence there are eleven cases of -s in the first singular. In one of these the pronoun is in direct contact with the verb: *I murdris*, 212, which should be compared with *I mus[e]* . . . and *murnys*, 211-212.

In the poem beginning with *We Lordis hes chosin a chiftane mervellus*, the first line illustrates the influence which a noun in apposition with a personal pronoun-subject may have on the form of the verb that follows. The imperative *Gladethe thoue Queyne of Scottis regioun* shows the influence of Southern literary models and illustrates the incongruity in the choice of forms that frequently attends such borrowing.

*The New Testament in Scots.—St. Luke.*<sup>1</sup> (c. 1520.)

**A. Endings in -s.**

1. Noun-subject: *myn een has sene*, II, 30; *synnaris luvis*, VI, 32; *foxis has*, IX, 58; *thouchtis cummis*, XXIV, 38; *discipilis . . . fastis oft and makis*, V, 33; *castis out your sonnys*, XI, 19.

2. Indefinite adjective or demonstrative or possessive pronoun-subject: *thin [thine] etis and drinkis*, V, 33; *thir has*, VIII, 13; *vtheris sais*, IX, 29; *mony seekis*, XIII, 24.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *thame that sittes*, I, 79; *riche men that has your confort*, VI, 24; *thir that heres*, VIII, 12; *een that seis*,

<sup>1</sup> Ed. T. G. Law, S. T. S., 1901.

x, 23; *Ye it ar that justifies you*, xvi, 15; *ye it ar that has duellit*, xxii, 28; *that . . . luves*, xx, 46.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *Thai that ar hale has*, v, 31; *ye . . . dois*, vi, 46; *thai ga . . . and bringis*, viii, 14; *ye . . . tuiches*, xi, 46; *ye your self entris*, xi, 52 but *we our self haue herde*, xxii, 71; *thay labour nocht, nouthir spynnis*, xii, 27; *ye Phariseis clengis*, xi, 39.

#### B. Uninflected forms.

(a) Personal pronoun + verb: *thai gang*, iv, 36; *ye met*, vi, 38; *thai ga*, viii, 13; *thai obey*, viii, 25; *thai cum*, xvii, 1; *thai do*, xviii, 34; *ye hope*, vi, 34; *thai beleue*, viii, 13; *we perise*, viii, 24; *thai entire and duelle*, xi, 26; *we our self haue*, xxii, 71.

(b) Verb + personal pronoun: *haf we*, iv, 23; *think ye*, v, 22; *do ye*, vi, 2; *cal ye*, vi, 46; *say ye*, ix, 20; *unbind ye*, xix, 33; *Quhy ete ye and drink?* v, 30; *slepe ye*, xxii, 46; *seke ye*, xxiv, 5.

There are three instances of the uninflected plural used with the relative pronoun: *almen that duell*, xiii, 4; *thai that haue money*, xviii, 24; *thai that haue power*, xxii, 25.

The imperative plural is uninflected throughout: *mak ye*, iii, 4; *joy ye*, vi, 24; *lufe ye*, vi, 27; *blesse ye*, vi, 28; *unbind ye him, and bring to me*, xix, 30. In every instance the subject-pronoun is expressed, although it may be remote from the verb as in *ga away fra me*, *al ye wirkaris of wickitnes*, xiii, 27.

The form of the second infinitive in *suffir me first to ga and beryse my fader*, ix, 59 is due to the analogy of words from the French like *peryss*, *perisch*.<sup>1</sup>

#### Gavin Douglas—*Translation of the Aeneid*.<sup>2</sup> (c. 1525.)

##### A. Endings in -s.

1. Noun-subject: *twa wourdis gais*, 11, 28; *logitaniis knawis*, 15, 13; *Troianiis frakkis*, 24, 12; *wallis risis*, 46, 11; *fludes rynniss*, 56, 7; *expositouris . . . makis*, 14, 20; *Italianis . . . callis* (: *wallis*), 28, 21; *salis the Troianiis*, 24, 3; *rissis yone large wallis*, 42, 15.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *N. E. D. s. v.* 'bury.'

<sup>2</sup> Ed. John Small, *The Poetical Works of Gavin Douglas*, Edinburgh, 1874. I have selected the Prologue and the first book of the *Aeneid*.



2. Indefinite adjective-subject: *sum cheisis*, 45, 16.
3. Relative pronoun-subject: *thai quhilk haitis*, 42, 7; *quhilk . . . remanis*, 24, 3; *buikis . . . quhilk contenis*, 11, 8.
4. Personal pronoun-subject: *thai ceis and . . . gewis*, 30, 26; *we . . . hes*, 36, 4; *ge . . . hes*, 42, 32.

**B. Uninflected forms.**

1. Personal pronoun-subject: *we se (: tre)*, 12, 23; (*he*), 64, 20; *ge fynd*, 14, 6; *thai say (: uway)*, 28, 20; (*Hisperia*), 51, 26; *thai ceis*, 30, 26; *we ken (: men)*, 36, 10; *we neid*, 52, 24; *thai sa (: Phrygia)*, 56, 28; *thai us deny (: by)*, 52, 11; *we gou pray*, 57, 12; *we compile*, 15, 24; *pai mene (: I wene)*, 15, 28; *have ge*, 33, 16.
2. Noun-subject: *heir and thair stand large cragis and brais*, 31, 12; *Ciclopes dwell (: fell)*, 33, 18.

**C. Endings in -th :**

*Thi sawis in sic eloquence doith fleit*, 5, 17; *doith clerkis*, 10, 7; *thair doith ane hundreth altaris stand*, 44, 30; *fatis . . . haith (: braith)*, 52, 21.

In addition to these four cases in the plural, the ending *-th* occurs five times in the third singular: *the rois . . . doith excell*, 3, 16; also 13, 14; 56, 9; 61, 13; and 66, 13 where *-th* follows *-s*: *Albeit my spreit abhorris, and doith grise*. The contracted form in the third singular occurs once: *now stant the chief palice*, 10, 17.

Inflected and uninflected forms are used interchangeably in the imperative plural when the subject is not expressed: *traistis*, 8, 25; 9, 13; 11, 1, but *traste*, 9, 20 and *traist* with remote subject, 11, 22; *gewis*, 19, 11 but *reid*, 17, 9; *pluk*, 33, 39; and *be*, 33, 26. Transition from the inflected to the uninflected form often occurs: *reidis . . . and cast*, 11, 26; *beis . . . do*, 19, 9; *beis . . . considdir . . . reid*, 6, 22. Here one case of inflection is felt to be sufficient for the whole context, and consequently the first verb is the one inflected. The inflected form occasionally intrudes into the imperative singular: *beis*, 40, 18.

The influence of Southern literary models on Douglas is also revealed by the frequent use of *bene* instead of *ar* in the present indicative plural. The use of *is* with a plural subject occurs once: *stickis . . . laid is*, 32, 9. A preceding plural subject is also found with *was*: *cupplis festnyt was (: bras)*, 4630, and *poetis that sens*

*was*, 5, 14. In the first singular, *-is* occurs three times: *I . . . speikis*, 6, 28; *I defend and forbiddis*, 12, 9; *I that . . . tursis*, 43, 4.

*The Complaynt of Scotlande.*<sup>1</sup> (1548 or 1549.)

A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *inuasions aperis*, 1, 13; *battellis consistis*, 15, 24; *dominions altris*, *dechaeis*, *ande cummis*, 21, 27; *volfis . . . hes*, 2, 23; *childir . . . growis and inccressis*, 20, 7; *hes bene diuerse translatours*, 16, 19.

2. Adjective-subject: *mony of us beleuis*, 32, 5; *mony of us thynkis*, 32, 14; *ane hundreht lyuis*, 35, 20.

3. Relative pronoun-subject: *plagis quhilk hes*, 1, 15; *enemeis that lyis*, 4, 2; *them that fechtis*, 15, 4; *thai that imputis*, 22, 17; *vs that professis*, 31, 9; *quhilk prouokis*, 34, 12.

4. Personal pronoun-subject: *ge daly of gour gudnes induris*, 3, 20; *thai see, or heris tel*, 14, 8; *ve seik . . . nor resistis*, 34, 33.

B. Uninflected forms:

*ve hef*, 17, 15; *tha begyn*, 20, 9; *ve hald*, 31, 23; *ve thynk*, 32, 14; *ve cal*, 32, 33; *ve pas*, 34, 17; *ve becum*, 34, 34; *thai persaeue*, 9, 19; *thai pleyse*, 20, 1; *ve beleue*, 32, 10; *ve adhere*, 34, 27.

There are seven instances of *is* with a plural subject. In each case the subject follows the verb: as, *nor is the famous atentio croniklis*, 3, 26; *ther is mony vordis*, 16, 34. *Was* is preceded by a plural subject three times: *offrandis that vas*, 8, 3; *them that vas*, 15, 8 and 9. The form of the verb in *I . . . hes tane* is due to analogy with the second and third singular when the verb is remote from its subject.

Sir David Lyndsay.—*The Dreme and The Testament and Complaynt of the Papyngo.*<sup>2</sup> (c. 1550.)

A. Endings in *-s*.

1. Noun-subject: *clerkis dois*, *D*, 349 and 495; *Poetis callis*, 394; *Astrologis sayis* (: *dayis*), 400; *wolfis cumis*, 899; *dayis*

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Murray, E. E. T. S., Extra Series, xvii and xviii, 1872. I have selected *Ane Epistol to the Qwenis Grace*, the *Prolog to the Redar*, and the first five chapters of the *Complaynt*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Poetical Works of Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount*, edited by David Laing, Edinburgh, 1871.

*induris*, *P*, 321; *clatteraris loupis*, 391; *Inglismen sayis*, 575; *wyffis* . . . *cryis*, 712; *faces provokis*, 868.

2. Relative pronoun-subject: *thame that fixis*, *D*, 133; *stedys that drawis*, 438; *the quhilkis excellentlye makis*, 521; *the quhilkis hes*, 886; *quho dois*, *P*, 399; *that* . . . *dois*, 982.

3. Personal pronoun-subject: *thay wyrk* . . . *and hes*, 945. In this example where the verb is remote from its pronominal subject, the form in *-s* is normal. But in *God wat geve we hes neid of lyves fude*, 674, the inflected form stands in direct contact with the personal pronoun, which fact affords ground for the suspicion that the text is at fault.

#### B. Uninflected forms.

1. Personal pronoun + verb: *thay se*, *D*, 326; *thay heir*, 327; *we want*, 829; *thay call*, 931; *thay dispone*, 206; *thay move*, 506; *thay do*, *P*, 39; *ye get*, 624; *thay stand*, 644; *ye haif*, 691; *thai persaeue*, 713; *thay juge*, 758; *we thee beseik*, 742.

2. Verb + personal pronoun: *laik we*, *D*, 826; *want we*, 873; *traist ye*, *P*, 855; *mak ye*, 1155.

In Lyndsay the imperative plural is uninflected even when the subject-pronoun is not expressed: *imprent*, *P*, 348; *Lat* . . . *traist*, 371; *marke*, 521; *presume*, 600; *be*, 1011; *depart*, 1090.

The Midland plural *bene* instead of the Northern *ar* is very common in the present indicative. Its frequent use with a singular subject suggests misapprehension on the part of Lyndsay as to its true grammatical significance: *the trew translatioun Of Virgill*, *quhilk bene consolatioun*, *P*, 34; *no thyng bene*, 213; *ilke court bene*, 367; *One thyng thare bene*, 441; *My wytt bene waik*, 474; *Quhare Christ bene kyng*, 613; *thy burgh bene*, 645; *me that bene*, 734. There are two instances of *is* with a plural subject: *Thare is none eiris*, *D*, 594, and *thare is few*, 944. It has intruded into the first singular in *I Quhilk cummyng is*, *D*, 155, the extension being favored by the analogy of *I persave* . . . *and considderis*, 816, and *I am* . . . *and hes*, *P*, 671.

Southern influence is betrayed by the numerous endings in *-th* both in the singular: *Europa doith stand*, *D*, 674; *My syster* . . . *haith*, 948; *sapience transcendith*, *P*, 9; *quhilk desyrith*, 44; *one doith oppresse*, 334, and in the plural: *wolfis* . . . *doith*, *D*, 912; *quhilks kepith*, *P*, 73; *Poetis of me haith*, 203; *peple sayith*, 770.

The investigation of the inflection of the present plural indicative has also been carried through parts or the whole of the following texts, which observe the same distinctions in the use of the plural forms as those already treated: *Evangelium Nicodemi*, edited by C. Horstman (Herrig's *Archiv*, LIII, 389-424); *The Kingis Quair*, edited by W. W. Skeat (S. T. S., 1884); *Ratis Raving*, edited by J. R. Lumby (E. E. T. S., 1870); *Rauf Coil-year* and Sir Richard Holland's *The Buke of the Howlat*, both edited by F. J. Amours (*Scottish Alliterative Poems in Riming Stanzas*, S. T. S., 1892-97); Henry the Minstrel's *Schir William Wallace*, edited by James Moir (S. T. S., 1885-89); John Bellenden's *Translation of Livy's History of Rome*, edited by W. A. Craigie (S. T. S., 1901); *The Historie and Chronicles of Scotland* by Robert Lindesay of Pitscottie, edited by Æ. J. G. Mackay (S. T. S., 1899; also *Thomas of Erceldoune*, edited by Brandl (*Sammlung engl. Denkmäler in kritischen Ausgaben*, II, Berlin, 1880); *The Pistill of Susan*, *The Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathele*, and *The Knightly Tale of Golagros and Gawane*, edited by F. J. Amours (S. T. S., 1892-97).

## CONCLUSION.

To sum up in conclusion the historical development of the forms of the plural, we find that in Early Northern the inflections *-þ* and *-s* are used without regard to the nature of the subject. This is not the case, however, with the vocalic endings, which are used only when the subject is a personal pronoun in immediate contact with the verb. If the verb is separated from its personal pronoun-subject by only one word, the Early Northern texts unite in presenting the full form in *-þ* or *-s* for the indicative plural. The verb likewise assumes the full inflection when the subject is unexpressed, but to this rule there are two exceptions, both occurring in the *Ritual*.

As we advance to Middle Northern, the first striking phenomenon we meet is the total disappearance of the inflection *-þ*. The *-s* of the Early Northern still persists, whereas all the vocalic endings have been reduced to *-(e)*, which is usually without syllabic value in texts as early as the *Cursor Mundi* and the *Surtees Psalter*. But a change has taken place in the functions of these endings. Economy of speech demanded that the work assigned to the inflected and the uninflected form should be more highly specialized. The loss in definiteness under the old system of two overlapping uses was gradually repaired by a process of adjustment in the language itself. Forms like *we biddas, gie stondas, hia cymes, haldas hia* are replaced by *we bid, ge stond, pai cum, hald pai*, the beginnings of which process are seen in the *we behalda usig* and the *habba we* of the Early Northern. The uninflected form gradually became associated with a personal pronoun-subject in direct contact with the verb and, this having once been consciously felt, its use was extended to all such cases to the exclusion of the form in *-s*. The presence of the pronoun was felt to be a sufficiently clear exponent of the form of the verb without the need of a distinct suffix.

Therefore the ending *-s* is no longer used regardless of the nature of the subject, although its range is still much wider than that of the uninflected form. It is used with every kind of subject except a personal pronoun in close contact with the verb, which the differentiating process had assigned to the uninflected plural. The



latter, namely the uninflected form, has therefore entered in a fuller measure upon its inheritance, a partial possession of which it had already obtained in the days of the *Ritual* and the *Gospels*. Its personality has become so enlarged that the sphere of its influence may now reach out over any non-substantival word that may intervene between the verb and its personal pronominal subject—an advance on the immediate contact demanded in Early Northern.

As has just been indicated, the nature of the intervening word, or words, is the all-important factor in determining the inflection of the verb. If this intervening element is a modifier of the predicate, the uninflected form is used. If it is introduced to explain or qualify the personal pronominal subject, its stronger personality dominates that of the pronoun and the inflected form is required. This distinction is illustrated by Dunbar in the poem beginning *We Lordis hes chosin* but elsewhere he writes *ge so blist call*; also by *We twa resemblis, Ratis Raving*, 35 but *As thai defalt mak*, 375. For this reason *ye your self entris*, *Luke XI*, 52 is to be preferred to *we our self haue herde*, *Luke XXII*, 71. Very rarely there occurs a justifiable use of the inflected form even though the verb is the next word after the personal pronoun-subject. This may happen when the subject-pronoun is at the end of a verse and the verb is the first word in the next succeeding verse, as *that yhit we / Callys hyr natyvyte*, Wyntoun, VII, 2880, where a pause separates the subject from the predicate.

How great may be the distance between the pronominal subject and the uninflected verb, in case the intervening words are parts of the predicate, varies with different authors and even at different times in the same author. For example, in the *Lay Folks' Catechism*, there occurs *we sklaundir or backbite* but *we gete or tas*. There is, however, a general tendency among Northern writers to use the inflected form if two or more words separate the verb from its subject. This tendency is sometimes counteracted by the requirements of the rime, which may cause a verb to assume the uninflected form although the personal pronominal subject is remote from the predicate. The requirements of the rime may also cause the use of the uninflected form with a noun, an adjective, or a relative pronoun, but this is much less frequent than in the case of a personal pronoun-subject. The fact that poetic license allows

uninflected forms in the rime in constructions that demand the full form elsewhere shows the danger incurred by those who attempt to infer the current speech-usage from the rime-words alone. When it is remembered that formal poetry often preserves archaic types and modes of expression not found in contemporary prose, such inferences must be considered hazardous unless reinforced by conclusions drawn from the usage of prose or from the language of popular poetry.

When two singular nouns or a noun and a singular pronoun are used conjointly as subject, it is frequently impossible to tell by the form of the verb whether it is meant to be singular or plural. The old usage allowing such subjects to be taken distributively with a singular verb frequently affords a ready explanation, as *Baith my self and my hors is reddy, Rauf Coilyear*, 58. This explanation, however, could not be given to account for *Baith the King and the Quene meitis*, 250, where the verb implies the idea of plurality, or at least of reciprocal relation involving plurality, on the part of the subject. The form of the verb may be either singular or plural in *For thou and sir John, pi sun, has kast me in care*, Minot, ix, 60. The insertion of a word in apposition is sufficient to cause the use of the inflected form in *For my Gaist and I baith cheueris, Rauf Coilyear*, 96, which intervening word is however dispensed with in *Saynt Steuen and I ligges euyn mete, Legends*, vi, 275. Quite abnormal is the uninflected form in *He and his munge ha thought, Ywain and Gawain*, 1215.

Because of the regular use of the *s*-ending in the second and third singular and its frequent employment with all the persons of the plural, it was analogically carried over into the first singular when the pronominal subject was at a distance from its predicate, as *I with my worde hase wrothe, York Plays*, ii, 80; *I knaw, Bot keipis, Robene and Makyne*, 11. The tendency to employ *-s* as an 'absolute' inflection for either singular or plural was the cause of the frequent use of *is* and *was* with any plural subject except a personal pronoun in contact with the verb. As the examples show, this usage was not confined to expletive constructions but was employed irrespective of the order of subject and predicate.

From the earliest times, the curtailed form with a postpositive pronominal subject could co-ordinate in the imperative with the full

form used unconditionally, as *nælle gie gedæma æfter onsione ah soþfæst dom gedæmaþ*, *John* VII, 24; but the use of the curtailed form in the imperative was never as general in Old Northumbrian as in classic West-Saxon. The co-ordination of the unconditioned form in -s with the uninflected form used with a postpositive pronoun is a common occurrence in Middle Northern: *Rises up, he said, and fle gee sone*, *Cursor Mundi*, 2813, and *Mi gestes late gee liue in pees, For scam ne dos þam na males*, 2794; also *Singes til oure God, singe yhe*, *Surtees Psalter*, XLVII, 7. To the number of these uninflected imperatives before a postpositive subject-pronoun must be added those plurals that were curtailed before a postpositive reflexive object, a procedure due to the fact that an object-pronoun used without a pronominal subject was as clear an exponent of the form of the verb as a subject-pronoun used without a pronominal object, as *Arise yow wele*, *Ywain and Gawain*, 1511; *holde you*, *York Plays*, II, 29; *mayke yow*, IV, 55. The number of uninflected forms was further increased in Middle Northern by the use of the curtailed plural without a postpositive pronominal subject<sup>1</sup> or object, provided that the omission of the pronoun was supplied by a contiguous personal pronoun used as the subject of a dependent verb, as *Luke ge cum*, *Ywain and Gawain*, 1514; *Looke that ge do*, *York Plays*, IV, 80; and perhaps the extreme case *Dwell here yf that ye canne*, IV, 29. Since the subject of such a dependent verb was rarely in immediate contact with the main imperative, the use of the uninflected form here was probably influenced by the optatives, which were uninflected in all constructions and which were used as adhortatives and imperatives in the first and third persons. This would explain *Lok þai alle be tain*, *Cursor Mundi*, 4896.

In the Scottish of Wyntoun all these principles are operative: *Luk that yhe be / Mery and glayd, and hawys na dowl*, VIII, 3598; but a freer use of the uninflected form is seen in *yhe supprys . . . Off kyndnes tharefor sett yhoure thought / And thynk for yhowe*, IV, 881. The uninflected form takes the place of the unconditioned full form in -s in *Thynk, Lordys, on Dawy and hys myldness*, VII, 1222. The interchange of inflected and uninflected forms, when

<sup>1</sup> From the consideration of the indicative, it has been seen that the principle that applies to the curtailed form when the personal pronoun is postpositive also holds in Middle Northern when it is prepositive as well.

not conditioned by a pronoun, is seen to the best advantage in "*Cum on falowis, be foremost ay.*" *A pryncis word off honeste* "*Gais on, gais on,*" *suld nevyr be*, IX, 3200.

After the loss of final *-e*, the curtailed imperative plural of most strong verbs and of all long-stemmed *-jan*-verbs assumed the same form as the imperative singular, and, when the subject-pronoun and the name of the object addressed were omitted, could not be distinguished from it. Because of this fact, the interchange of the uninflected with the inflected form of the plural when the subject-pronoun is unexpressed may be erroneously regarded as the interchange of the imperative singular and plural in the same speech.<sup>1</sup>

The uninflected form in unconditioned constructions gradually prevailed over the inflected plural of the Middle Northern imperative until, by the close of the fifteenth century, the use of the latter had become extremely rare. In Henryson and Dunbar, the uninflected plural is almost invariably used, although the Chaucerian *-th* occasionally presents itself. Douglas, who likes to preserve the archaic *s*-plural, betrays his lack of appreciation for its significance by using it in the singular. During this period there is a tendency to use the *-s* with the first imperative plural in a series of two or more and to omit it with the others. The sporadic cases of its use in the sixteenth century and afterwards are merely revivals of an old form that had become obsolete.

On the contrary, the *s*-plural of the indicative, while diminished

<sup>1</sup>The use of the uninflected plural without a pronoun was instrumental in bringing about an apparent interchange of the singular and plural imperative in Chaucer. The ambiguity of Ten Brink's language (§ 189) in treating the curtailed forms of the plural is misleading. And G. L. Kittredge in discussing this point (*Observ. on the Lang. of Chaucer's Troilus*, § 118) regards these uninflected forms in the plural as borrowings from the singular: 'Forms in *-e* (apocopated) or without ending also occur, and some of these may be due to an extension of the singular form to the plural or to the petrification of a singular in an idiomatic use. Cf. especially *lat* in the periphrasis *lat us* with infinitive (*lateth* is altogether unknown to Chaucer).' The phrase *lat us* cited by Professor Kittredge, although an imperative in form, really represents the old adhortative optative in *-en* which we find curtailed to *-e* with a postpositive subject-pronoun as early as Alfred, and with a postpositive object-pronoun in the *Ancren Riwele*. From this viewpoint the Chaucerian *lat us* is perhaps better explained as the curtailment of an original plural than as 'the petrification of a singular in an idiomatic use,' as Professor Kittredge suggests.

